Fatah Al Ghaib

(THE REVELATIONS OF THE UNSEEN)

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Abdul Qadir Jilani

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INTRODUCTION

Hazrat Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani – the Saint of Baghdad (mercy of God be upon him) – does not stand in need of an introduction to the Muslim world. Among the books associated with his name, the *Futuh al-Ghaib* has acquired a fame that falls to the lot of very few works of this kind. Born in a province whose peoples are highly imaginative and mystical by nature, I felt quite early in my life drawn towards the personality of this Saint. The later rationalistic meandering of my mind, however, disturbed the natural development of this admiration. It was, however, at the suggestion of a Muslim friend from Bangal that I ultimately made up my mind to go through this particular book with a scrutiny that would enable me to present to the English-speaking world the precious gems that fell from the lips of this great mystic of the Middle East. The fruits of my first labour, however, were not so happy...

The book is evidently mystical, though not too mystical for an average intelligent man with a little introspection. It seems that the world is too much taken up with the question of material existence to find any time for a study of this nature. And yet the social and political upheavals all the world over, making the question of life and existence so uncertain, have, I believe, created a proper psychological background for the study of a book such as this. This should not be misunderstood that I am suggesting or that Islam suggests an escapist attitude under such circumstances. Islam never tries to create the escapist mentality nor does the present book encourage such a frame of mind. We are, however, for a change in the mental outlook of man which will bring about an actual solution of the tangles confronting our species in this age. It is not difficult to see that the lack of a higher vision of life has resulted in an over-emphasis on comparatively less important aspects of our worldly existence,

which fact in its turn has been the root cause of all our strifes. It is hoped that a perusal of books such as this will open the eyes of people to that higher vision and lessen the heat of ruinous competition in the field of material acquisition.

The Arabic text in my hand is the one which is to be found in an Urdu translation of the book entitled *Futuh al-Ghaib Mutarjam*, by *Maulvi* Sikandar Shah of Benares. As this translator assures us in his introduction, he took great pains in securing the complete and correct text of the original, and yet the text which accompanies this translation is not free from mistakes, some of which are extremely disappointing. One will understand what I mean if one examines carefully pages 46 to 49. In spite of this drawback, the text may be regarded as fairly dependable and helpful in that it provides vowel points which are fairly accurate. As for the Urdu translation itself, though rather free here and there, it undoubtedly shows the deep learning of the translator as well as his acquaintance with matters connected with Islamic spiritual science, otherwise known as *tasawwuf*.

A few words about this science will, I hope, be of use to such of the readers as are not conversant with the traditions of Islam. The word "mysticism" which is generally used to indicate this aspect of Islam is a little misleading. The English word has an elusive scientific atmosphere about it, whereas *tasawwuf* is a regular science with its set laws and a full scheme in details. It is based on palpable experiences which can be reproduced, like in any other science, under set circumstances. Every pilgrim has to pass through the same stages in his spiritual journey and these stages are readily recognizable by their detailed descriptions given unanimously by all masters. The landmarks and pitfalls are described in equally exhaustive particulars. Just as in any other course of study, there are methods in it to test the progress of the disciple and his merit. As in any other branch of knowledge, there are geniuses in this branch of study who create a stir in the world, but even the humblest learner can at least aspire to develop a living sense of the presence of God in the midst of his

struggle for material existence. He also develops a taste for this culture and an interest in those who follow this path and thereby acquires an increasing control over his passions and desires for things worldly. It can be readily understood that this paves the way for real social peace, the crying need of the times. As for the more gifted pilgrims, but for them God would be a mere hypothesis. It is these experiences that have made God a palpable fact of experience and have made thinking humanity believe in the continuity of life after death. It is they who radiate a faith in life everlasting which in its turn takes away the sting from death and enables us, average men, to view life with a sense of ease. They attain to a perfect certainty about the existence of God by a speaking contact with Him and thereby act as the vicegerents of the Holy Prophet. It is to these people that the Holy Prophet refers in his much-quoted saying: "The learned among my followers are like the prophets of Israel" or in another saying: "The learned are the successors of the prophets."

The Law being complete in the shape of the Holy Qur'an, no prophet is needed after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And yet these spiritual luminaries must be there to testify to the existence of God, to the truth of the Qur'anic revelation, and to the continuity of the Holy Prophet's spiritual regime. Without these personalities, belief in all these verities will be reduced to mere make-believe, devoid of any power to influence people's thoughts and actions. Exactly this has been the fate of all religions except Islam, which, though professed by a politically backward people at the moment, is yet rich in the tradition of these living experiences.

I, therefore, appeal to the scientific-minded people of other faiths to read these discourses carefully and ascertain for themselves if their approach is not a perfectly scientific one. And we should bear in mind that this is only one of many such works by people of this line. In fact, it is these works that have saved Islamic theology from appearing the dry thing which it is in every other religion. What we have here is not a speculative

philosophy nor a dogmatic theology, but an experimental science with its attractions as such. To describe briefly the general framework of this science, we must bear in mind that human consciousness is divided into three conditions rising upward in the evolutionary scale:

1. *Nafs ammara*, i.e. the unruly animal self.

2. *Nafs lawwama*, i.e. the struggling moral self.

3. *Nafs mutmainna*, i.e. the composed God-realised self.

In the first stage man is a pure animal, restless with animal urges, impatient of restrictions and stranger to any pricking of conscience. By a systematic course of religious training, of which obedience to commands and prohibitions is the chief feature, he develops a sense of propriety and impropriety and repents after every falling into error. This is the *lawwama* state. This stage begins with a faint dawning of the moral sense and ends in a complete surrender of the animal ego in man, which marks the third and the highest stage, *viz. mutmainna*. The struggle between the lower and the higher selves having now ended, the pilgrim enters a condition of perfect peace, of purity, of rectitude and of knowledge.

To indicate the experiences, starting from the threshold of this stage to those further on, the Sufis have coined three more terms:

1. *Fana. i.e.* a complete subjugation of the animal self. At this stage man ceases to be disturbed by any urge of desire. The only urge left in him is prayerful surrender of his whole being.

2. *Baqa*. This means a restoration of the self in a new consciousness, this time not of the flesh but of the spirit. The urges of the self are no longer from the animal passions which drive a person to acts involving violation of others' rights and thus leading to disturbance in the society, but from the God-

controlled spiritual region, the source of actions invariably being beneficial to humanity and creation.

3. *Liqa*. This is the stage in which man's spiritual knowledge rises to such a high pitch that the rewards for his faith, sincerity and devotion no longer remain a matter of belief but a palpable certainty and an experience, as if he has them already, and his faith in God reaches a point in which it seems to him that he is seeing Him face to face. Such a man becomes free from all fears about the future and from all sorrows about the present and past. In such a condition a man is free from all hesitation and obscurity of judgment and doubts and misgivings. In this condition, the devotee is coloured by the attributes of God in the manner of a piece of iron, assuming the colour of fire if it is kept long enough in it. And in moments of commotion, such a man's feelings partake of Divine powers, so much so that his pleasure brings the pleasure and blessing of God and his anger brings the wrath and curse of God, and events seemingly contrary to the laws of nature come into being through his attention. Receiving powers from God he possesses a power of creation. He creates events and even determines the course of history.

It should be borne in mind that after a pilgrim has entered the state of *fana*, which in the language of the Qur'an is called *Istiqama*, the next two stages of *baqa* and *liqa* follow as a matter of course. The reason is that when a person becomes completely void of attachment to creation and desires and personal will, he automatically enters the state of *baqa*. And as long as a man is not confirmed in the state of self-annihilation and his surrender to God does not become a spontaneous affair, he cannot be said to be in the state of *baqa*, which requires that all acts of devotion and surrender should become natural acts, not needing any effort. When such a state is attained, the blessed man feels that all that belongs to him is really God's. And while other people of the world relish the satisfaction of their personal

desires, such a person enjoys the worship of God and His remembrance.

Thus, when the pilgrim is confirmed in this state of *baqa* and it becomes the warp and woof of his very being, a light appears to descend from heaven and the mist of uncertainty is altogether lifted from his heart, which is now filled with a sweet feeling of love, never experienced before, like the one which one experiences at the time of reunion with a loving friend after a long separation. This is accompanied by a highly pleasing shower of Divine communications every now and then which may be said to be attended by a sweet heavenly smell and a coolness like that of spring breeze. At this stage, the devotee feels pleasure in sacrificing his everything for the sake of God — even his honour and life. His heart becomes so filled with Divine light that it seems as if he is experiencing the rays of the mid-day sun within his bosom and as if God Himself has descended on his heart with all His Glory. And these are the signs of the state of *liqa*.

It is also to be remembered that, while attainment of *fana* is the result of human efforts, the two higher stages *baqa* and *liqa* are the gifts of God proceeding from His grace. The pilgrim's spiritual struggles take him up to the stage of *fana* only. After this, Divine grace takes him by the hand and carries him to the higher regions. So the rigours of the journey are felt only up to the stage of *fana*.

It also seems necessary to explain another set of ideas and corresponding terms in Sufism in relation to the order of saints. According to the Sufis, there is a hierarchy of saints (or *awliya*) at all times in the world, through whom God manifests His mercy in the world of humanity. In the absence of the Prophet they are the vice-gerents of God on earth on his behalf. They are of three different grades — *badal* (pl. *abdal*), *ghauth*, and *qutub*.

Badal — literally, substitute — is so called because if any one of these saints happens to die, God immediately substitutes him by another (*Sihah*). They are righteous persons of whom the world is never destitute (Ibn Durayd, *Sihah, Muhkam, Qamus*). But the more authoritative view is that they are given this name because of their ever-changing spiritual condition. They are in a flux and are not allowed to remain in one state. Being still on their way to God-realisation, they are not allowed to settle down at any intermediate point. As to their exact number and their posting, opinions are divided. They seem to be the lowest in rank among the spiritual successors of the Holy Prophet.

Ghauth and *Qutub*. According to the best authorities, "they are a hierarchy of the saints of a particular generation, and are supposed to be pre-eminently endowed with sanctity and with miracle-working faculties. If anybody is a *qutub* or a *ghauth*, he is recognised as such only by his agents, *badals*, unless, of course, he himself reveals his position to a particular man. The literal meaning of *qutub* is *axis*, or *pivot*, *the point upon which a thing turns, the chief upon whom the state of affairs turns*. So a *qutub* is he whose attention and prayers decide the course of events in a particular society of people. He may be regarded as a kind of spiritual agent in a particular community. The literal meaning of *ghauth* is *aid* or *succour* in the midst of difficulties. So a *ghauth* is a kind of intercessor who intercedes at a moment when the sins of a nation or humanity are at the point of being punished. These seem to be particularly tender-hearted like the Holy Prophet Muhammad himself and whose hearts melt at the woes and sufferings of humanity and who are, therefore, a means of averting Divine punishment. With the acceptability of their prayers assured, their prayers become a plea for Divine forgiveness and mercy. So *badal* or *abdal* may be regarded as spiritual magistrates. Above them are the *qutubs* and in the highest rank are the *ghauth*.

Together they constitute the make-weight of spiritual humanity at the particular moment, acting on behalf and under

the stamp of the Holy Prophet — peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. But unlike the *mujaddids* who are not only authorised but even commanded to announce their existence and authority, neither the *abdal*, nor the *qutub*, nor even the *ghauth* are authorised to proclaim their existence and position. They act in silence, serving humanity with precepts and examples and praying incessantly for the gentle forgiveness of human sins.

Some people have contended that the idea that such people exist and that they are a kind of intercessors for humanity is not Islamic. A perusal of verses 20-27 of chapter *Ya Sin* (O Man) will show that even in a nation doomed to destruction for its iniquities, there live persons who testify to the truth of a prophet appearing among them by their power of readily recognising the will of God. The event begins with the following words:

> *And from the remote part of the city there came a man running. He said: O my people! follow the apostles.* (36:20)

Now, who was this man? I suggest that he was either a *ghauth* or a *qutub*.

As for the idea that punishment for the sin of a nation is averted by the presence of an eminent man of spirituality, this can be deduced from the story of Prophet Lot as given in chapter *Hud*. This narration shows that the punishment of even a doomed nation is deferred out of deference to a spiritual personality living in its midst. Even the punishment of the Quraish was deferred till the migration of the Holy Prophet from Makkah. The Holy Qur'an lays down this principle in so many words:

> *Nor is Allah going to chastise them while you are among them* (8:33).

So this idea of the Sufis can be traced to principles laid down in the Holy Qur'an itself, apart from its verification by indisputable experiences of saints throughout our history.

The well-known *hadith* ascribing to God the words:

"One who is hostile to My *wali* receives an announcement of war from Me" presents only the counterpart of this idea, because if hostility to a *wali* excites the wrath of God, his attention and prayers must be able to draw the mercy of God. Of course, the *wali* spoken of here is of the higher type, which forms the subject of our discussion.

A few words would also seem necessary to explain another set of terms used in the pages that follow. It is again a trio – *siddiq*, *shahid* and *salih*. But unlike the previous set, these terms are no creation of the Sufis but are Qur'anic in origin. It is the Holy Qur'an which divides those favoured by God into four groups – Prophets, *siddiqs*, *shahids* and *salihs* (4: 69). The circle of the first group has been closed after the appearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, because Divine Law has reached its completion in the Holy Qur'an. But the other three groups are to continue extending their circles till the end of human history.

Siddiqs are next to the prophets in rank. The root word is *sidq* meaning *truth* and the particular word indicates an intensified form of this quality. Thus *siddiq* may be said to be an embodiment of truth. Strict truthfulness in speech is the minimum requirement. Conformity of speech to action and a deep inalienable love for truth in all its forms are its higher demands. Such a person recognises truth in all its manifestations. He hates the very semblance of falsehood and loves truth in all its manifold phases. *Hazrat* Abu Bakr Siddiq was such a one, thus his epithet *Siddiq*. He recognised the prophethood of the Holy Prophet without asking either for argument or for miracles. Then his constant companionship of the Holy Prophet in all kinds of risks, particularly at that most critical moment of his life when he was fleeing from his enemies who thirsted for his blood, shows that his attachment to truth was not confined to his thought and speech but went deeper and sank in his very being. It was this devotion to truth that gave him that unshakable faith

which enabled him to withstand the utter confusion that followed the Holy Prophet's demise and threatened the budding spiritual common-wealth with disruption.

Next in grade comes the *shahid*. The root word is *shahada*, that is, he witnessed or experienced. A *shahid* reaches a state of spiritual journey in which he may be said to be witnessing the glory and power of God. He feels as if he is in His very presence. The spiritual values of things and people which are hypothetical and are matters of belief to an ordinary pilgrim, and hence have to be maintained with an effort, are to the *shahid*, manifest truths, for which he would pay any price. Acts of virtue proceed from him spontaneously as out of natural desires. Hence he feels pleasure at sacrificing everything that he has at the altar of truth. One need not actually be killed to prove oneself a *shahid*, but one must be fully prepared to die a martyr's death at any moment of one's life.

The last in the grade is the *salih*. The root word is *salaha* — *he became sound or healthy*. It is the barest requirement of spiritual health that a man should relish devotional practices. He should enjoy religious acts. For such a relish he should first be cleansed of all impure elements in his spiritual being, such as insincerity, greed, jealousy, show and ostentation, pride and arrogance, cruelty, etc. He must be, so to speak, a living embodiment of piety and moral caution the minimum qualification for a godly man.

A word more to the non-Muslim readers of this book. It has been suggested by outsiders that Sufism is a borrowed plume and not of the soul of Islam. This is based on crass ignorance. All the affairs that led to the formation of the Islamic society and civilisation were based on the verbal revelation coming to the Holy Prophet in moments of spiritual trance, and minor revelations coming to his companions every now and then are indisputable facts of history. Exclusive devotional practices of a whole band of disciples called *Ashab al-Suffa* are also among the

outstanding facts of the Holy Prophet's time. To say in the face of this that Islam was a dogmatic and ritualistic faith in its origin and that *tasawwuf* was a later growth is to deny a fact of history that is, as bright as daylight. The fact is that *tasawwuf* is the soul of Islam, and political Islam is its physical manifestation. Of course, much of what passes for sufism is not *tasawwuf*. Ideas and practices foreign to Islam and even antagonistic to it have undoubtedly entered the body politic of even this living faith, particularly for the last few centuries, because of the general decadence in the Islamic socio-intellectual order. But disease does not prove the non-existence of health altogether, nor decay, the non-existence of body. In spite of corrupting influences from outside and their effects on our spiritual system, *tasawwuf* in its pristine purity has existed throughout in the Islamic society. It needs eyes, however, to see it. Eyes that can see nothing but howling and dancing *darweshes* as samples of Islamic mysticism must undergo a major spiritual operation to be fit to discover *tasawwuf* in Islam.

In conclusion, I pray in all humility to the All-Merciful Allah that He may inspire my readers and me through the words that follow so that we may work along the path of these luminaries of spiritual humanity to the best of our efforts.

The Qur'anic verses in English have been taken from the work of Muhammad Ali, the pioneer translator of the Holy Book into English. May Allah bless him for this sacred work!

AFTAB-UD-DIN AHMAD

A LIFE-SKETCH OF *GHAUTH AL-'AZAM* MOHY-UD-DIN SAYYID ABDUL QADIR GILANI

Parentage

Sayyid Abu Muhammad Abdul Qadir was born in Naif in the District of Gilan in Persia in the month of Ramadan in the year 470 A.H. corresponding to 1077 of the Christian era or thereabout. His father's name was Abu Salih, a God-fearing man and a direct descendant of Hazrat Imam Hasan, the eldest son of Hazrat Ali, the Holy Prophet's first cousin, and of Fatima his beloved daughter. His mother was the daughter of a saintly person, Abdullah Sawmai who was a direct descendant of Imam Husain, the younger son of Hazrat Ali and Fatima. Thus Sayyid Abdul Qadir was both a Hasani and a Husaini.

Early Life

From his early childhood, he was quiet and sober, given to contemplation and used to what, for want of a better expression, is called `mystic experiences' in English. When he was about eighteen years old his thirst for knowledge and eagerness for the company of holy men took him to the distant city of Baghdad, at that time the centre of learning of all kinds. Later in life he was given the title of *Ghauth* al-Azam, that is, the greatest of all saints. In the Sufi terminology a *ghauth* is next to a *nabi* in spiritual rank and in the dispensation of Divine mercy and favour to mankind. A great authority of our times, however, has ranked him with the *siddiqun*, as the Qur'an would call such people. And he bases his view on an incident that took place in the course of the first journey of the Shaikh to Baghdad. It is related that as he was about to leave home on this momentous journey his widowed mother sewed eighty gold coins inside his coat just below his armpits as a provision against hard times. This money was his share of the patrimony. As he was taking

leave of his mother, a saintly mother of a saintly son, her parting advice was that he should not speak an untruth at any cost whatsoever. The son promised to bear this advice always in mind. The caravan with which he travelled had gone only as far as Hamadan when it encountered a gang of robbers. In the course of their looting the robbers did not take much notice of him because he looked quite simple and poor. One of them, however, casually asked him if he had any money with him. The young Abdul Qadir, remembering his promise to his mother, unhesitatingly replied, "Yes, I have eighty gold pieces sewn into my garment by my mother."

The robbers were astonished to hear him make this statement. They could not imagine a man could be so truthful as that. They took him to their leader, who put the same question to him and his reply was the same as before. The leader then ordered that particular part of his coat to be opened, and as it was opened, the eighty gold coins were found as stated. The robber chief's astonishment knew no bounds. He inquired of the young traveller the basis of this surprising veracity. The Shaikh related all that had taken place between himself and his mother at the time of parting and added that if he had told a lie on the very first stage of his journey undertaken for the sake of religious knowledge, he had obviously no chance of acquiring any real knowledge of religion at subsequent stages of his career. On hearing this, the leader of the gang burst into tears, fell down on his feet and repented for all his past sins. It is reported that he was his first disciple. Our authority is of the opinion that this incident showed the *siddiq* in the making. Had his very nature not been truthful in origin, such a courageous and unwavering stand for truth, in the face of such heavy odds, would not have been possible for him.

A Student in Baghdad

Truthful and charitable to the extreme, he had to endure great hardships during the period of his study at Baghdad. By

dint of his natural talents and devotion he very soon became the master of all the different subjects that could be learnt by a scholar in those days. He proved to be the greatest jurist of his time. But his deeper spiritual yearnings were restless to manifest themselves. Even in his adolescence when he was engaged in his studies, he was fond of *mujahida* or the ascetic life so as to rise above his animal self. He often resorted to fasting and would not ask for food from anyone even if he had to go without any meal for days at a time. He used to seek out the spiritually-minded in Baghdad and cultivate intimate friendship with them. It was in the course of this search that he came across Hazrat Hammad, a vendor of syrups but a great saint of his time. Gradually this saint became a sort of a spiritual tutor to our hero. Hazrat Hammad, however, was a very dry and harsh kind of person and his treatment to our budding *sufi* was extremely severe. But our would-be *ghauth* bore all this as a kind of corrective for his own spiritual defects.

Spiritual Exercises

After he finished his studies he became even more severe on himself. He began to deny himself all the needs and comforts of life except the barest minimum that would sustain life. The time and energy he thus saved he would employ in prolonged prayers and in the reading of the Holy Qur'an. So engrossed did he become in his prayers that he could be seen saying his morning prayers with the ablution performed for the prayers of the previous night. It is reported that very often he was seen finishing the recitation of the whole Qur'an in a single night. During this period he avoided all contacts with people and would not meet or talk to any man. If he went out he would roam about in the deserts. Eventually, he left Baghdad and went to stay at Shustar, a place twelve days' journey from Baghdad. For eleven years, he shut himself off from the world. The end of this period marked the end of his training as well. He received the illumination, as it is called. His animal self had by now vacated

his soul in favour of his higher being. He was now established in God-consciousness.

Tempted by the Devil

A spiritual event took place on the eve of this new role and this is narrated in the form of a story. Similar stories are related of practically all religious figures known to history. It is a story of temptation. It appears that all such stories express a natural event of life in the language of allegory. We read, for example of the temptation of Prophet Jesus -- how the devil took him to the hill-top and from there showed him the kingdoms of the world and asked Jesus to worship him if he wanted to be the master of those kingdoms. We know the memorable reply of Jesus -- worthy of his position as a spiritual leader of men. For all we know, it might just be an event of inner struggle of the master at a delicate point of his life. An incident of this nature also took place in the life of the most historical of all religious personalities - I mean the Holy Prophet Muhammad. When he persisted in his preachings against the idolatrous practices of his countrymen, his opponents, the leaders of the Quraish, tempted him with their offers of beauty, wealth and power. And no Muslim can ever forget his memorable reply on this occasion -- "I want neither pelf nor power. I have been commissioned by God as a warner unto mankind. I deliver His message to you. Should you accept it, you shall have felicity in this life as well as in the life to come. Should you reject the Word of God, surely God will decide between you and me."

It was no vision in this case but a solid fact of earthly existence.

Quite in keeping with this tradition, a story having two versions, has been narrated about Shaikh Abdul Qadir Gilani. One version is that one day the Devil or Satan appeared before him, introduced himself as Gabriel and said that he had brought from Allah the *buraq* (that is, the lightning conveyance on which the Holy Prophet rode to the heavens on the night of his spiritual

ascension called Mi`raj) as he had been invited by Him to be in His august Presence in the highest heaven. To this the Shaikh promptly replied that the speaker of these words before him could be no other than the devil because neither Gabriel nor the *buraq* could come to the world for any person other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Satan, however, had still another missile to throw. He said, "Well, Abdul Qadir, you have saved yourself by dint of your knowledge."

"Be off, Satan," the Saint retorted, "do not tempt me any further; it is not through my knowledge but through the grace of Allah that I have escaped from your trap."

The other version of the story is that once the Shaikh was in the wilderness and was without food and drink for a long time. A cloud appeared overhead and showered rain. The Shaikh quenched his thirst with it. Presently, a luminous figure appeared on the horizon and said, "I am your God; I now make all unlawful things lawful for you."

At this the Shaikh recited the formula, "I seek the protection of God from Satan the accursed."

At this, the figure changed into a cloud and it was heard saying, "By your knowledge and by the grace of God you have been saved from my deception." Then Satan asked the Shaikh how he could recognise him so quickly. The Shaikh replied that his announcement making unlawful things lawful betrayed him, because such an announcement could not have been from God.

This story has a similarity with the vision of Peter.* But whereas this great disciple of Jesus, falling prey to the devil's deception, abrogated the law about prohibited food, throwing to the wind the clear words of the Scripture and life-long practice of the master, this brave son of the Arab Prophet tore into shreds the devil's snare with the ease of an adept soldier.

As for the two versions of the story under discussion, I am inclined to think that both of them may be correct, presenting

two different incidents in an allegorical language. One incident might relate to his struggle with pride of knowledge. The other may refer to his struggle with economic difficulties which sidetrack a man in his spiritual journey. Consciousness of power, and anxiety for comforts are the last weaknesses to leave the mind of a spiritual pilgrim. And it is only after one has overcome these two eternal enemies of spirituality that one becomes qualified to be a genuine leader of men.

A teacher of people

Now that the Shaikh had passed these tests, if he spoke anything or admonished anyone it was not from the intellectual point any longer, but from the spiritual vantage point — the point of self-realisation. At this stage when he received the inner commandment, as the Shaikh himself would like to call it, to preach, Islamic faith had grown weak. Muslims were either given to sensual pleasure or were satisfied with the rites and rituals of religion. The spirit of religion was now to be found here in its native brilliance. About this time he had a significant vision having a bearing on the question. It was on a Friday in the year 511 A.H. He saw in the vision that he was walking along a street in Baghdad, where a sick and emaciated man lying on the roadside greeted him with the Islamic salutation. When the Shaikh answered the salutation, the man asked him to help him to sit up. On the Saint's giving him the help asked for, the man sat up and began to grow miraculously big in stature. Seeing the Saint frightened at the phenomenon, the stranger allayed his fear saying, "I am the religion of your grandfather. I became diseased and miserable, but God has revived me through your help."

This happened on the eve of his public appearance in the mosque and as such, fore-shadowed the future career of the Saint. Later in life, the enlightened public conferred on him the title of *Mohy-ud-Din* or *the reviver of the faith*, a title which has since then been regarded as a part of his illustrious name. But although he emerged from his solitude, he would not take to

public preaching even them. For another eleven years he lived in a corner of the city and carried on with his devotional practices acquiring more and more inner illumination.

It was at the end of this period, that is 521 A.H., that he began to impart his knowledge to others. In that year, he was given a *madrasa* to teach students. By then, he was inwardly prepared for the task and had too an inner commandment, as he called it, for that new life. In the beginning, as was to be expected, he had very few students, but very soon his fame for learning, piety, inner illumination, veracity, and his strict adherence to the *Shari'ah* spread far and wide and people from all over the world began to flock round him to reap the benefits of his lectures and sermons which covered many aspects of life. Gradually the *madrasa* building proved too small for the ever-swelling number of students and pupils and the adjacent houses had to be acquired in 528 A.H. to enlarge the capacity of the building. Even this was not deemed sufficient for the demands of the eager public, to accommodate whom every Wednesday morning he would appear in the small *Idgah* and address the assembly from a platform raised for the purpose. When even this proved insufficient, he began to preach from the bigger *Idgah* situated outside the city, where subsequently a sort of a sanctuary was built for him and this came to be known as *Musafirkhana*.

He used to deliver sermons thrice a week at the *Idgah* on Friday mornings, at the *madrasa* on Tuesday nights, and at the *Musafirkhana* (Guest House) on Wednesday mornings. Different kinds of people came to him to learn different things. There were *Sufis* as well as *Faqihs* (i.e. students of jurisprudence), men of wealth as well as men of letters. Even non-Muslims attended these sermons and many of them embraced Islam at his hands. The Muslim sinners would suddenly change their course of life if they happened to listen to his discourses – such was the spiritual force at the back of his sermons. Indeed, the spiritual awe of his personality was so great

that he was feared by the greatest men of the realm. The fact is that these spiritual personalities do not take to any occupation of their own choice. They surrender their whole being to their Creator and would not move in any matter unless they are directly handled by God and made to move in a particular affair. Public preaching is, therefore, no act of their own, and as such is not backed by any human preparation. Their preparation is done by God Himself and the whole inspiration for public preaching comes from Him directly. So when they speak they are prompted by the holy spirit of God. Hence the miraculous and revolutionary power of such utterance.

Domestic Life

His public appearance, it is interesting to note, synchronises with his married life. Up to 521, that is, at age of fifty-one, he never thought of marriage. He even regarded it as a sort of impediment in the path of spiritual efforts. But as he came to establish contact with the people, in obedience to the commandment of the Holy Prophet and in deference to his example, he married four wives, all of whom were models of virtue and devoted to him. He had forty-nine children — twenty-seven sons and the rest daughters.

Four of his sons became noted for their erudition and learning.

(1) Shaikh Abdul Wahhab, the eldest born, was a great scholar and was given charge of the *madrasa* of his father in 543 A.H. After the Saint's death he, also, used to deliver sermons and give his opinions on questions of Islamic *Shari'ah*. He also held an office under the State and was a very popular man.

(2) Shaikh Isa. He was a teacher of *Hadith* and a great jurist. He was also known to compose poems. He was a good preacher and also wrote books on Sufism. He settled down and finally died in Egypt.

(3) **Shaikh Abdur Razzaq**. He was a scholar and even a *hafiz* of *Hadith*. Like his father, he had a reputation for truthfulness. He possessed to some extent the spiritual trend of his father and became, like him, a very popular personality in Baghdad.

(4) **Shaikh Musa**. He was also a scholar of renown. He migrated to Damascus where he eventually died.

The second named, *Shaikh* Isa, is the person through whom the seventy-eight discourses of the Saint have been handed down to us. His name is accordingly mentioned at the very beginning of this book. The first named, Abdul Wahhab, is the source of the last two discourses that present an account of the Saint as he lay dying. The fourth named *Shaikh* Musa, is mentioned towards the end of the book in the 79th and the 80th discourse.

In the last two discourses a mention is made of two of the sons who were at the bedside of the dying Saint – Abdur Razzaq, the third mentioned name Abdul Aziz.

Usual Occupation

As we have already seen, the Saint used to deliver three public sermons a week. Besides these sermons, every day in the morning and afternoon he used to give lessons on *tafsir* or commentary on the Qur'an and also on the *Hadith* (or the Traditions of the Holy Prophet) and principles of Islamic law and other allied subjects. After mid-day prayers he was seen issuing *fatwas* or verdicts on legal questions presented to him from all parts of the world. Every evening before the Maghrib prayers he would distribute bread among the poor. After the evening prayers it was his habit to sit for dinner because usually he fasted during the day throughout the year. But before every such meal it was his practice to have it proclaimed that anybody who needed food and was present in the neighbourhood could come and join him in his dinner. After '*Isha* prayers, after the manner of all saintly persons he would retire to his chamber and spend the

greater part of the night in the worship of God a practice recommended by the Holy Qur'an for all who would claim to be in close spiritual relationship with the Holy Prophet. So like a true follower of the Holy Prophet, he used to serve humanity all hours of the day and serve his Creator during the greater part of the night.

Death

He died in 561 A.H. (1166 C.E.), at the age of ninety-one. The day was the 11th of *Rabi' al-Thani*. This date is commemorated by his admirers up to this day and is known as *Giarwin Sharif* in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.

Heritage

After the Saint's demise his son and disciples founded a disciplined order for the cultivation of real Islamic spirituality and dissemination of correct Islamic teachings among the people of the world. This was named after him as the *Qadiriyya Order* and is noted for its adherence to the principles of the *Shari'ah* up to this day. In its own time it did great service to the general cause of Islam in the world and its contribution to the Islamic spiritual science has been enormous. Among the recorded teachings and exhortations of the Saint, three are extant and enjoy worldwide reputation. The foremost of these is *Futuh al-Ghaib*, of which a translation is presented in the following pages.

Next in importance comes *Fath al-Rabbani* - a collection of sixty-eight sermons delivered in the years 545-6 A.H.

The third one is a *Qasida* or a poem that explains the role and rank of the Saint in ecstatic language. It is called *Qasidat al-Ghawthiyya*

Like all other religious orders the *Qadiriyya Order* of our day seems more interested in this last mentioned treatise rather than in the other works that contain exhortations for self-improvement and convey a message from the world unseen.

But whatever the lapses of his latter-day admirers, the Saint's influence on Islamic history has been enormous and his personality shines out as a sparkling jewel of Islamic spirituality today just as it did in previous times.

PRELIMINARY

The glory of the learned, the light of Iraq and Egypt, the spokesman of theologians, the interpreter of men of spiritual knowledge, the unique leader, the honour of religion, *Shaikh* 'Isa Abu Abdul Rahman, the mercy of God be upon him and upon his progeny, said:

My father, the peerless chief, the most learned and possessor of very high and perfect spiritual knowledge, the leader of the leaders, the leader of nations, the chief of chiefs, the succour of men and the jinn, the reviver of religion, Abu Muhammad Abdul Qadir, son of Abu Talib, son of Abdullah, son of Yahya, the great ascetic, inhabitant of Jilan, may Allah sanctify his soul and illuminate his tomb, said:

Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, first and last, outwardly and inwardly, as many times as the number of His creations and equal to the measure of His words, praise be to the weight of His throne and to the extent of His Own pleasure and to the number of all things single and in pairs and of things wet and dry of all that our Lord has created and spread forever and in all its purity and blessedness. Praise be to Him Who has created, then made complete, and Who has made things according to their measure and then guided (them to their goal). Praise be to Him Who causes death and gives life, Who makes one laugh and weep, Who makes one near and still closer, Who shows mercy and abases, Who gives food and drink, Who gives one good and bad luck, Who withholds gifts and then bestows them; He, by Whose command the seven strong heavens stand and the mountains are fixed like pegs and the spread-out earth is stayed and in Whose mercy no one can be disappointed and from Whose planning and enforcement of order and dignity and command no one can escape. He to Whose service no one can be

averse and of Whose blessings no one can be devoid; so He is praised because He has been affectionate and He is given thanks because He affords safety.

Then blessings on His Prophet, Muhammad, the chosen — anyone who follows what he has brought receives guidance and whoever turns away from him is misguided and perishes — the truthful Prophet of recognised truthfulness, abstainer from the world, seeker of and inclined to the Friend on High, the one who has been chosen from among all His creatures and selected from the whole of His creation, the one with whose advent the truth has come and with whose appearance falsehood has disappeared and with whose light the earth is illuminated.

Let us once more invoke blessings on him — blessings abundant and pure and blessed, as also on the pure among his offspring and companions and his followers, together with His favours — such of them as are best to their Lord in respect of action and most right in respect of their words and most correct in following His path. Next, our entreaties and prayers and recourse is to Him, our Lord and Creator Who gives us food and drink and confers benefit on us and protects us and keeps us safe and gives us life and drives and keeps away from us all that injures and gives us trouble, and all this just out of His mercy and compassion and as an act of favour, and because of His will to give us standing protection in all words and deeds, in secret and in open, and in our expressions and in our reticence and in our straitened circumstances and in ease and comforts. Surely He is the absolute Doer of whatever He likes and orders whatever He wills, He knows whatever is hidden, and is informed of all affairs and conditions, both of sins and errors as well as of acts of obedience and states of nearness to God. He hears all noises and accepts all prayers from whomever He likes and wills, without any contention or hesitation.

Now, verily the favours of God are on His servants, in abundance and ceaselessly in all hours of the night and the day

and at all times and moments and in all conditions, as God the Exalted has said:

> *And if you would count Allah's favours you will not be able to count them.* (16:18)

Elsewhere, He, the Exalted says again:

> *And whatever good you have, it is from Allah.* (16:53)

So I have neither the power nor the heart nor yet the tongue with which I can count and enumerate these blessings. Nor can numbers comprehend them, nor yet can human thoughts and minds grasp them, nor yet can hearts count them, nor yet can tongues describe them. So, among the blessings which He has enabled the tongue to describe and the power of speech to express, and the fingers to record and the power of description to describe are these few words that have been revealed to me from the inspirations from the unseen world. These alighted on my heart and filled up its space and the return of normal state brought them out on the surface. And then the favour and mercy of God, the Lord of people, helped me to express those words in a right form of speech to serve as guidance for the seekers of truth.

Thus spoke he (God be pleased with him).

FUTUH AL-GHAIB OR (THE REVELATIONS OF THE UNSEEN)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

THE FIRST DISCOURSE

Three things are indispensable for a believer in all conditions of life: 1. He should keep the commandments of God. 2. He should abstain from the forbidden things. 3. He should be pleased with the decree of Providence. Thus the least that is expected of a believer is that he should not be without these three things. So he should make up his mind for these and talk to himself about them and keep his organs engaged in them.

THE SECOND DISCOURSE

Follow faithfully (in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet) and do not create innovation and remain obedient (to God and His Prophet) and do not transgress. Uphold the Unity of Godhead and do not ascribe any partner to Him; and conceive Him in His Holiness and do not ascribe any evil to Him. Maintain His truth and do not give way to double-standards; and remain patient and do not run away; and apply to Him for your needs but do not feel annoyed but wait; and be united in obedience and do not be disunited. Love one another and do not bear spite towards one another; and keep free from vices and do not be contaminated or defiled by them; and beautify yourselves with obedience to your Lord; and do not remain away from the doors of your Master; and do not refrain from being attentive to Him; and do not delay your repentance and return to Him; and do not feel weary of making petition to your Creator at any time during the day and the night. (If you do so) may be mercy will be shown to you and you will have good luck and be kept away

from hell-fire, and be given a happy life in paradise and be united with God and enjoy the blessings of God together with the company of virgins in the Abode of Peace and in that state abide for ever; and you may ride good horses and you may be happy with white-eyed *Hurs* and various kinds of scents and melodies of female slaves together with those other blessings; and you may be exalted in the company of the prophets and *siddiqs* (perfected men of truth) and *shahids* (that is, dedicated witnesses to the cause of truth) and *salihs* (that is, ordinary men of piety who are free from glaring sins) in the high heaven.

THE THIRD DISCOURSE

And He (may God be pleased with him) said: When the servant of God is in the grip of a trial he first tries to escape from it with his own efforts, and when he fails in this, he seeks the help of others from among men such as kings and men of authority, people of the world, men of wealth, and in the case of illness and physical suffering, from physicians and doctors; but, if the escape is not secured by these, he then turns towards his Creator and Lord, the Great and Mighty, and applies to Him with prayer and humility and praise. So long as he finds the resources in his own self he does not turn towards the people and so long as he finds resources in the people he does not turn towards the Creator.

Further, when he does not get any help from God he throws himself in His presence and continues in this state, begging and praying and humbly entreating and praising and submitting his needs in fear and hope. God the Great and Mighty, however, tires him out in his prayer and does not accept it until he is completely disappointed in all the means of the world. The decree of God and His work then manifest themselves through him and this servant of God passes away from all the worldly means and the activities and efforts of the world and retains just his soul.

At this stage he sees nothing but the work of God, the Great and Mighty, and becomes, of necessity, a believer in the unity of God (*Tawhid*) to the degree of certainty, that in reality there is no doer of anything except God, and no mover and stopper except Him, and no good and no evil and no loss and no gain and no benefit, and no conferring and no withholding and no opening and no closing, and no death and no life and no honour and no dishonour, and no affluence and no poverty but in the hand of God.

He then becomes in the presence of God as a suckling babe in the hands of its nurse and a dead body in the hands of the person who gives it the funeral bath and as a ball before the stick of the polo-player — kept revolving and rolling and changing position after position and condition after condition until he feels no strength either in his own self or in others besides himself for any movement. He thus vanishes completely his own self into the work of his Master.

So, he sees nothing but his Master and His work, and hears and understands nothing except Him. If he sees anything, it is His work and if he hears and knows anything, he hears His word and knows through His knowledge and he becomes gifted with His gifts and becomes lucky through His nearness and through his nearness he becomes decorated and honoured and becomes pleased and comforted and satisfied with His promise and is drawn towards Him. And he feels aversion for and is repelled from those besides Him and he desires and relies on His remembrance and he becomes established in Him, the Great and Mighty, and relies on Him and obtains guidance from, and clothes and dresses himself with the light of His knowledge. And is apprised of the rare points of His knowledge and of the secrets of His power and he hears and remembers only from Him, the Great, the Mighty, and then offers thanks and praise therefore, and takes to prayer.

THE FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When you are dead to the creation, it will be said to you: "May God have mercy on you," and God will make you die out of the desires of the flesh. And when you die out of the desires of the flesh it will be said to you: "May God have mercy on you."

Then He will give you death in your will and desires; and when you are dead in your will and desires it will be said to you: "May God have mercy on you," and He will restore you to (a new) life.

Then you will be given a life after which there is no death, and you will be enriched with a wealth after which there is no poverty. And you will be awarded a gift after which there will be no obstruction, and you will be made happy with a happiness after which there will be no sorrow and misery, and you will be blessed with a blessing after which there will be no adversity; and you will be equipped with a knowledge after which there will be no ignorance; and you will be given a security after which there will be no fear; and you will be made to prosper so as not to be unlucky; and you will be honoured so as not to be dishonoured; and you will be made near (to God) so as not to be kept away; and you will be exalted so as not to be lowered; and you will be honoured so as not to be abused; and you will be purified so as not to be polluted any more. Then the fulfilment of all hopes and the (flattering) remarks (of people) will assume reality in your case. You will then become the philosopher's stone so much so that you will elude being recognised (in your elevated position), and you will be so exalted that you will have no like of yourself, unique so that you will have no peer and no equal. You will become unique and peerless, most hidden and most secret.

You will then become the successor of every messenger and prophet of God and every truthful man (*siddiq*). You will become the finishing point of all saintliness (*wilayat*) and the

living saints will flock to you. And through you will difficulties be solved and through your prayers will the clouds, rain and the fields yield harvest; through your prayers will be removed the calamities and troubles of the rank and file of people (in the country) -- even of those living in the frontiers, of the rulers and the subjects, of the leaders and the followers and of all creatures. So you will be the police officer (so to speak) for cities and people.

The people will traverse distances and hasten towards you and they will bring gifts and offerings and render you service, in every condition of life, by the permission of the Creator of things. The tongues of people will (at the same time) be busy everywhere with applause and praise for you. And no two persons of faith will differ with regard to you. O! the best of those who live in populated areas and those who travel about, this is the grace of God and God is the Possessor of mighty grace.

THE FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When you see the world in the hands of those who are of it, with its decorations and vanities, its deceptions and snares, and its fatal poison of which the outside is soft to touch and the inside injurious and which is quick to destroy and kill; whoever touches it and deceives them with it and keeps them indifferent towards its evils and treacheries and breaches of promises -- when you see all this, be like one who sees a man answering the call of nature, exposing his private parts and emitting bad smell thereby. As (in such circumstances) you refrain from looking towards his nakedness and shut your nose from the bad odour and foul smell, similarly you should act towards the world; when you see it, turn away your sight from its tinsels and close your nose against the foul smell of its sensualities and gross enjoyments, so that you may remain safe from it and its trials, while what is appointed as your portion will come to you all

right and you will enjoy it. God said to His chosen Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

> *And do not cast your look of greed on what We have given certain classes of them to enjoy of the splendor of this world's life, that We may thereby try them. And the sustenance given by your Lord is better and more abiding.* (Qur'an, 2:131).

THE SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

Vanish from the people by the command of God, and from your desire by His order, and from your will by His action, so that you may become fit to be the vessel of the knowledge of God. Now, the sign of your vanishing from the people is that you should be completely cut off from them and from all social contacts with them and make your mind free from all expectations of what is in their control.

And the sign of your vanishing from your desires is that you should discard all efforts for and contact with worldly means in acquiring any benefit and avoiding any harm; and you should not move yourself in your own interest and not rely on yourself in matters concerning yourself and not protect yourself nor help yourself, but leave the whole thing entirely to God; because He had the charge of it in the beginning and so will He have it till the end, just as the charge rested on Him when you were hidden in the womb (of your mother) as also when you were being suckled as a baby in the cradle.

And the sign of your vanishing from your will by the action of God is that you should never entertain any resolve and that you should have no objective, nor should any feeling of need be left in you nor any purpose, because you will not have any objective other than the one of God. Instead, the action of God will be manifested in you, so at the time of the operation of the will and act of God, you will maintain passivity of the organs of

your body, calmness of your heart, broadness of your mind, and you will keep your face shining and your inside flourishing and you will be above the need of things because of your connection with their Creator. The hand of Power will keep you in movement and the tongue of Eternity will be calling you, and the Lord of the Universe will be teaching you and will clothe you with light from Himself and with spiritual dress and will install you in the ranks of past men of knowledge.

After this (experience) you will never remain broken down. Neither any sensual desire nor any will remains in you, like a broken vessel which retains neither any water nor any dreg. And you will be devoid of all human actions so that your inner self will accept nothing but the will of God. At this stage, miracles and supernatural things will be ascribed to you. These things will be seen as if proceeding from you when in fact they will be acts of God and His will.

Thus you will be admitted in the company of those whose hearts have been smashed and their animal passions have vanished. Hence they have been inspired with the Divine will and new desires of daily existence. It is in reference to this stage that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says: "Three things out of your world have been made dear to me — perfume, women and prayer, wherein has been reposed the coolness of my eyes.

" Indeed these things have been ascribed to him after they have first gone out of and vanished from him, as we have already hinted. God says, "I am with those who are broken-hearted on account of Me."

So God, the Exalted, will not be with you unless all your desires and your will are smashed. And when they are smashed and nothing is left in you and you are fit for nothing but Him, God will create you afresh and will give you a new will-power wherewith to will. And if in the newly-created will there is found again even the slightest tinge of yourself, God the Exalted will

break this one also, so that you will always remain broken-hearted. In this way, He will go on creating new wills in you and if your self is found related to it, He will smash it every time, till at last the destiny reaches its end and the meeting (of the Lord) takes place. And this is the meaning of the Divine words: "I am with those who are broken-hearted on My account," And the meaning of our words: "Your self being found related to it" is that you get established and satisfied in your new desires.

God says in one of His unofficial revelations to the Holy Prophet (called *Hadith Qudsi*): "My faithful servant constantly seeks My nearness through optional prayers till I make him my friend. I become his ear with which he hears, and his eyes with which he sees, and his hands with which he holds (things), and his legs with which he walks, that is, he hears through Me, sees through Me, holds through Me and understands through Me."

This undoubtedly, is the state of *fana* (or self-annihilation). And when you are annihilated in respect of yourself and the creation, and since the creation is good or bad, as you yourself are good or bad, you will be in no expectation of any good from them nor fear any evil from them. All what will be left will be new, of God alone, as it was before He started creation, and in His ordination lie good and evil.

So He will give you safety from the evil of His creation and will submerge you under the ocean of His good. Thus you will become the focal point of all that is good and the springhead of all blessings and happiness and pleasure and light and peace and tranquility. So *fana* is the end and base of the journey of the saints. All the previous saints in their different stages of development have been asking for persistent efforts for changing their own will to the will of God. All of them, to the end of their lives, annihilated their own will and transformed it into the will of God. This is why they are called *abdal* (a word derived from *badala* meaning, change). Thus in the view of these personages, it is a sin to associate their own will with the will of God.

And in the event of forgetfulness and overwhelming emotion and fear, God, the Great, comes to their help with His mercy by reminding and awakening them, so that they return from their forgetfulness and seek the protection of their Lord because there is no one absolutely free from the blemish of will except the angels. The angels are maintained in the purity of their will and the prophets are maintained in their freedom from the desires of the flesh; and the rest of creation among the Jinn and human beings charged with the responsibility of moral behaviour are not protected in either way. Of course, the saints are protected from the desires of the flesh and the *abdal* from the impurity of will or motive. But even these cannot be regarded as free from these two respective evils because it is possible for them to be inclined towards these two weaknesses at times; but God overtakes them with His mercy and brings them to their senses.

THE SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

Get out from your own self and be away from it and be a stranger to your sense of self. Surrender everything to God and become His gatekeeper at the door of your heart and keep His commandments by admitting whomever He permits to be admitted, and honour His prohibition by keeping out everything which He forbids so as not to allow the desire of the flesh to get into your heart after it has gone out of it. And to expel the desire of the flesh from the heart one has to put up resistance to it and refuse subordination to it in all conditions; and to admit it into the heart means to acknowledge subordination to it and to make alliance with it. So, do not will anything which is not the will of God. Any will of yours which is not the will of God is a desire of the flesh, which is, so to say, the wilderness of fools and it is death for you and a cause of falling away from the sight of God and of screening Him away from yourself, if you are in this wilderness. Always guard the commandment of God and abstain from His prohibitions and surrender to Him always in all that He

has ordered and do not associate with Him anything from His creation. Thus your will and your desires and your passions are all His creations. So do not will anything nor desire anything nor indulge in any passion so that you may not prove to be a polytheist. God says:

> *So whoever hopes to meet his Lord, he should do good deeds, and join no one in the service of his Lord.* (Qur'an 18:110)

Polytheism consists not merely of idol-worship. It is also polytheism to follow the desire of the flesh and to adopt anything of this world and of the hereafter in association with God. Because whatever is besides God is not God. Thus when you are engaged in anything which is besides Him you are undoubtedly associating that other thing with God. Therefore, beware and do not rest, and fear and do not feel secure, seek and do not remain indifferent; then alone will you attain to security. And do not ascribe any condition and position, of yours to your own self and do not claim anything among these for yourself. Thus if you are placed in any condition or raised to any position, do not speak of it to anyone. Because in the changing of circumstances from day to day, the glory of God manifests itself in an ever-new aspect; and God intervenes between His servants and their hearts. It may be that the thing about which you speak may be removed from you and the thing which you think to be permanent and abiding may undergo a change so that you will be put to shame before those to whom you spoke about them. You should rather reserve the knowledge of this within your own self and should not communicate it to others. Then if the thing continues, in existence, know it to be the gift of God and ask for power to be thankful, and for an increase in the favours of God. But if the thing ceases to exist, it will bring progress in knowledge and light and wakefulness and regard. God says:

> *Whatever message We abrogate or cause it to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it.*

> *Knowest thou not that Allah is Possessor of power over all things?* (Qur'an 2:106)

So do not consider God to be powerless in anything and do not ascribe any shortcoming to His decree and His procedure and do not entertain doubt about His promise. In this matter, it is incombent that you should imbibe virtues of the excellent example of the Prophet of God. Verses and chapters that were revealed to him and were adopted in practice and were recited in the mosques and written in books, even these were taken up and changed and replaced by others and the attention of the Holy Prophet was directed towards these new revelations, which replaced the old ones. This happened in the external law.

As for the inner things and knowledge and spiritual state which obtained between him and God, he used to say that his heart used to be clouded and he used to seek the protection of God seventy times each day. It is also narrated that a hundred times a day the Holy Prophet used to be taken from one condition to another and from this to still another and thus he would be made to attain higher and higher stages in nearness to God and stages in his faith in the unseen and the robe of light with which he was clothed used to be changed accordingly, every progressive step making the previous stage appear dark and defective in comparison, and comparatively faulty in respect of obedience to the commandments. So he used to receive instructions for seeking protection from God because the best of all states in a servant is the state of seeking protection and turning to God. This is because in it there is acknowledgment of his sin and fault and these are the two qualities which are found in a servant in all conditions of his life and which belong to him as a heritage from Adam (peace be on him) who was the father of mankind and the chosen one of God. When the darkness of forgetfulness to the promise and covenant besmirched the clearness of his spiritual condition, and he manifested the desire to abide in the abode of peace and in the neighbourhood of the Beneficent and Benevolent Friend, and He wished for the

coming of honour, angels descending on him with blessings and peace. At that time his personal desire manifested itself and the will of Adam was found mixed up with the will of God, so this will of his was smashed and the first state was made to disappear and the nearness to God then existing was taken away; and then his position slipped away from him and the light of faith that was with him was changed into darkness and the purity of his spirit was thereby darkened. Then this chosen one of God was reminded (of his fault) and was made to acknowledge his sin and mistake and was instructed to admit his fault and imperfection.

Then Adam said (peace be on him): *Our Lord! we have wronged ourselves and if Thou forgive us not and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.* (7:23)

Then came to him the light of guidance and the knowledge of repentance and the consequent knowledge of reality and the knowledge of the wisdom that was hidden in the incident before this and which could not be revealed but for this incident. Then God turned towards them mercifully so that they might repent. Then that purpose of his (Adam's) was changed for another as was his previous condition also, and there came to him the higher state of saintliness (*wilayat*) and he was given a station in this world and in the hereafter. Thus did this world become a living place for him and his progeny and the hereafter, the place for their return and eternal rest.

Thus you should take the Prophet of God, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him), who is His friend and the chosen one, and his great ancestor Adam, the chosen of God, both of whom were among the friends of God, as your example in the confession of your faults and in seeking His protection from sins and in the adoption of humility and weakness in all conditions of life.

THE EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When you are in a particular condition do not wish for another condition either higher or lower. Thus, when you are at the gate of the King's palace do not wish for an entrance into the palace unless you are made to enter it by compulsion and not of your own accord. And by compulsion I mean a stern order which is repeated. And do not consider it enough to have mere permission for entrance, because this may be just a trick and a deception from the king. You should rather hold your patience till you are compelled to enter the house by the sheer force of command from the action of the king. For then you will not be overtaken by any chastisement from the King on account of this action of His. If, however, you meet with any punishment it will be on account of the evil of your liking and greed and impatience and unmannerliness and want of contentment with the condition of life in which you were. Then when it so happens that you enter the palace under such a compulsion, enter it in all silence and with your looks cast down, observing proper manners and being attentive to whatever you are commanded to do by way of any service and occupation, without asking for any promotion in the station of life. God said to His Prophet, His chosen one:

> *And strain not thine eyes towards that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) the splendour of this world's life, that We may thereby try them. And the sustenance of Thy Lord is better and more abiding.* (Qur'an 20:131)

Thus by His words, *The sustenance of Thy Lord is better and more abiding,* God administers an admonition to His Prophet, the chosen one, to make him regardful of the existing condition and to remain contented with the gifts of God. To put this commandment in other words, "Whatever I have given you of good things and prophethood and knowledge and contentment and patience and the kingdom of religion and fighting for the

sake of religion — all these are better and worthier than what I have given to others." Thus all good lies in being regardful of the existing condition and in being contented with it and in warding off all desires for anything which is besides it, because such a thing must be either one that is allotted to you, or one which is allotted to another person, or the one which is allotted to nobody, but has been created by God as a trial. So if it is destined for you, it is bound to come to you, whether you like it or dislike it. It is not proper, therefore, that any unmannerliness be manifested by you or any greed be in your desire for it, because it is disapproved by the standards of intelligence and knowledge. And if it is destined for another man, why should you bear hardships for a thing which you cannot get and which is never to reach your hands? And if it is only a trial, how can an intelligent person like and approve that he should ask for himself a trial and actively seek it? Thus it is proved that good and safety lie wholly in paying regard to the existing condition. Then when you are made to climb up to the upper story and from there to the roof of the palace you should observe, as we have already stated, respectfulness, silence and good manners. Nay, you should do more than this because you are now nearer the king and closer to dangers. So do not desire any change from your existing state to any other state, higher or lower, nor should you desire either for its continuity and permanence or for any change in it. In fact, you should have no option whatever in the matter because that will amount to ingratitude in respect of the existing blessings and such a sense of ingratitude, of necessity, renders him, who is guilty of this, abased in this life and the hereafter. So keep on acting as we have told you, until you are raised to a position where you will be granted a fixed status whence you will not be removed. You should then know that it is a gift of God accompanied as it is with the manifestation of its indications and signs. You should, therefore, stick to it and not allow yourself to be removed from it. The states (*ahwal*) of spiritual changes belong to the *awliya* (ordinary saints) whereas the stations of

spiritual establishment (*muqamat)* belong to the *abdal* (or advanced saints).

THE NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Such acts of God are manifested to the *awliya* and the *abdal* in the course of *kashf* (spiritual vision) and *mushahida* (spiritual experiences) as overwhelm the reasoning power of man and shatter to pieces all habits and customs. This manifestation is of two kinds — one of them is called *jalal* (majesty and glory) and the other *jamal* (gracefulness). The *jalal* produces a disquieting fear and creates a disturbing apprehension and overpowers the heart in such an awful manner that its symptoms become visible on the physical body. Thus it is narrated of the Holy Prophet Muhammd (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that during prayer a simmer very much like that of a boiling cauldron could be heard from his heart and this on account of the intensity of fear caused by his observing the Majesty of God, an experience which also revealed to him His glory. And similar things are reported from Prophet Abraham, the friend of God, and Umar, the Caliph (peace of God be on them both).

The experience of God's graceful manifestation, however, is His reflection on the heart of man, producing light, joy, elegance, sweet words and loving conversation and glad tidings with regard to great gifts and high position and closeness to Himself, where all their affairs are to return eventually; and in the allotment of which in the beginning of time the pen of destiny became dried and which were decreed in the remote past. This is a favour from Him and a mercy and a confirmation meant for them in this world till the completion of the time which is appointed. This is done so that they may not exceed the limits of appropriate love in the sheer intensity of their desire for it and thereby their hearts may not break so that they meet with destruction or become weakened by their standing in servitude till there comes to them the time of certainty by which we mean

death. He does this with them just out of kindness and mercy and regard and also by way of training their hearts out of affection because He is wise, knowing, gentle towards them and kind. So it is that it is related of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that he used to say to Hazrat Bilal who used to sound the call for prayers: "Cheer our heart, O Bilal." What he meant was that he should sound the call of prayer so that the Holy Prophet might enter the state of prayer to experience those graceful manifestations of God which we have already discussed. This is why the Holy Prophet said, "And the coolness of my eyes has been reposed in prayer."

THE TENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

Verily there is nothing except God and your self and you are addressed, and the self of man is opposed to God and inimical to Him and all things are subordinate to God and the self of man really belongs to God as a creation and as a possession and the self of man entertains presumptions from whence arise false hopes and passions and sensual pleasures. So ally your self with truth by opposing your self and become inimical to your self. Thus God said to Prophet David (peace be on him), "O David, I am your unavoidable resort, so hold firmly to this resort; true servitude consists in your becoming inimical to your own self for My sake."

It is then that your friendliness towards God and servitude to Him will become a proven fact. And it is then that you will get your share of things holy, wholesome and pleasant. You will then become dear and honourable and everything will become your servant and render you homage and will be afraid of you, because all of them are subordinate to their God and in harmony with Him, since He is their Creator and Originator and they acknowledge their servitude to Him. God says:

And there is not a single thing but glorify Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification. (17:44)

This means that everything in this universe is conscious of His presence and obeys His commands. And God of might and glory said:

Then He said to it and to the world: come both willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly. (Qur'an 41:11)

Thus all servitude consists in opposing your self and your carnal desires. God says:

And follow not (low) desire, lest it lead thee astray from the path of Allah. (Qur'an 38:26)

He has also said:
Shun your low desire because there is nothing that contends with Me in My kingdom except the carnal desire of man.

And there is a famous incident related of Abu Yazid Bustami that when he saw God the Almighty in his dream, he asked Him, "How is one to get to You?"

God said, "Discard yourself and come to Me."

"Then," continues the Saint, "I got out of my self as a snake gets out of its slough."

Thus all good lies in fighting one's self in everything and in all conditions of life. If, therefore, you are in a state of piety, oppose your self so much so that you may keep away from the forbidden things of the people and their doubtful things and from their acts of help and from depending on them and putting any reliance on them, or from any fear of them or from coveting what they possess of the vanities of the world. Thus, you should not expect any gift from them by way of present, or alms, or charity, or by way of redemption for certain lapses or as a

fulfilment of some vow. You should, therefore, free yourself of all concern about the means of the world in all their various aspects so much so that if you have got a relation who is wealthy, do not desire his death with a view to inheriting his wealth. Thus, you should get out of the creation with a strenuous effort and consider them like a gate that closes and opens and like a tree which sometimes yields fruit and at others remains barren, and (know that) every such event is the doing of a doer and planned by a planner and He is God, so that you may be a believer in the oneness of the Lord your God.

And do not forget at the same time the position of human efforts lest you fall victim to the creed of the fatalists (*Jabariyya*), and believe that no action attains its fulfilment but in God, the Exalted. You should not therefore worship them and thus forget God, nor should you say that the actions of men proceed from anything but from God, because if you say so, you will become an unbeliever and belong to the category of people known as *Qadiriyya* (believers in the doctrine that men have absolute control over the origin and cause of actions). You should rather say that actions belong to God in point of creation and to men in point of effort, and this is the view that has been handed down to us by traditions which related to the discussion on rewards and punishments.

And execute the commandment of God pertaining to them (people) and set apart your own share from them by His commandment and do not exceed this limit because the order of God will stand and it will judge you as well as them; do not be the judge yourself. And your being with them (people) is a decree of God and this decree of God is in darkness, so enter this darkness with a lamp which is also the judge and this is the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. Do not go beyond these two. But if there arises in your mind any thought or you receive any revelation, submit them before the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet.

And if you find in these (authorities) a prohibition against what has occurred to you or been received by you through revelation, such as if it is revealed to you that you should commit fornication, or take to usury, or keep company with immoral people, or something else in the line of sinfulness, keep away from such a course of action and abstain from it and do not accept it and do not act upon it and remain firm in your conviction that this must be from the devil, the accursed; and if you find in these two authorities just an allowance for the things revealed to you such as fulfilment of lawful desires like eating, drinking, dressing or marrying, etc., abstain from it likewise, and do not accept it and know that it is a suggestion of your animal self and its desires, and that you are commanded to oppose it and be hostile to it.

And if you find in the Book of God and in the practice of the Holy Prophet neither any prohibition nor a mere permission for the thing received through revelation but it is a thing which you cannot understand, -- for example, if you are asked to go to a certain place or meet such and such a righteous person whereas through the blessings of God bestowed on you in the form of knowledge and illumination, you do not stand in need of going to that place or meeting the person mentioned, hold your patience in the matter and do not be in any hurry about it. Instead ask yourself: "Is it a revelation from God and should I act upon it?" Rather, wait to decide on any step in the matter. It is a practice of God of power and glory to repeat such a revelation and to command you to be quick in your efforts in the matter, or to reveal such a sign which is revealed to the people of knowledge of God -- a sign which is understandable only by the intelligent among the *awliya* and the confirmed among the *abdal*, and you should by no means be in any hurry about the matter because you do not know the sequel of the matter and the ultimate purpose of the affair; nor are you aware of where lies a trial and a path of ruin, and a subtle planning contrived by God and an examination for you.

So you should be patient till God Himself becomes the doer of the thing in you. So when the act becomes distinctly of God and you are carried to such a position, if now any trial confronts you, you will be safely carried through it because God the Exalted, will not chastise you for an action which is His own. And it is certain that chastisement comes to you for your active participation in the happening of a thing.

If you are in the state of reality and it is the state of *wilayat* (saintliness), then stand opposed to your passions and obey the commandments fully. Obedience to commandments is of two kinds. One is that you should take from the world means of subsistence to the extent of the just demands of your self, and that you should avoid indulging in sensual pleasures and perform your duties and engage yourself in warding off sins, open and secret. And the second kind relates to the hidden commandment; and it is the commandment of God with which He either enjoins His servant to do or forbids him doing anything. And this hidden commandment applies to things permissible, for which there is no positive injunction in the Law, in the sense that they neither belong to the class of prohibited things, nor to the class of things specified as obligatory, but are rather of an obscure nature wherein the servant is given complete freedom to act, and these are called *mubah*. In these the servant should not take any initiative, but wait for an order concerning them. When he receives an order he obeys it. Thus all his movements and restful conditions become dedicated to God. If there is an injunction in Law with regard to a certain thing, he acts in accordance with it, but if there is no injunction in the Law, he acts on the hidden commandment. It is through these that he comes confirmed as a man attaining reality.

And where there is not (even) this hidden commitment, and it is just an act of God, it entails a state of resignation. And if you have attained to the truth of truth which is otherwise called the state of immersion (*mahw*) or annihilation (*fana*), it is the state of the *abdal* — who are broken-hearted on account of Him,

a state belonging to pure monotheists, to men of spiritual enlightenment; to men of knowledge and (higher) intelligence, (men who are) chiefs of the chiefs, the wardens and protectors of people, the vicegerents of the Beneficent, and His friends and confidants, peace be on them. To pay obedience to the commandment in such matters is to go against your own self and to be free from reliance on any ability and power, and to be absolutely devoid of all will and purpose with regard to anything of this world and the hereafter. Thus you will become the servant of the King, and not of the Kingdom, of the Divine commandment and not of the desires of the flesh; and will become like a baby in the care of a nurse and a dead body in the hands of the washer at the time of the funeral bath, and an unconscious patient lying before the physician, in all matters that are outside the range of injunctions and prohibition.

THE ELEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When the desire for marriage arises in your mind while you are poor and needy and you find yourself unable to afford it and you hold yourself in patience in expectation of relief from God Whose power created in you such a desire, or Who found the desire in you, He Himself will help you (either by removing the desire from you) or sustain you in bearing the burden of the same by making its resources accessible to you by way of gift, together with His blessings for sufficiency and making it light for you in this world and easy in the other. Then God will call you patient and grateful because of your patience in the matter and contentment with His Providence. So He will increase you in purity and power. And if it is a decree to Providence towards which He has driven you with His blessings of sufficiency, your patience will change into gratitude and the Mighty and Glorious has promised the grateful ones increase in His gifts, as He says:

If you are grateful, I will give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe. (Qur'an 14:7)

And if it is not destined for you, you should be indifferent towards it and drive it away from your heart whether your animal self likes it or not. You should thus hold your patience and oppose your desire and hold fast to the commandment of the Law. Be contented with the decree of Providence and hope in this condition for the favour and gift of God. Indeed God Himself has said:

Truly the steadfast will be paid back their reward without measure. (Qur'an, 39:10)

THE TWELFTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

When God the Mighty and Glorious gives you wealth and you are diverted by it from obedience to Him, He screens you away, on account of it, from Himself both in this world as well as in the hereafter. And it is also possible that He may take away the gift from you and change you and reduce you to poverty as a punishment for you turning away from the Giver, attracted by the gift. And if you engage yourself with obedience to Him and become indifferent towards the wealth, God will make a free gift of it to you and will not lessen it even by an atom. Wealth is your servant and you are the servant of the Lord. Therefore live in this world under His loving care and in the hereafter honourably and in ease in the garden of abiding residence, in the company of the truthful (*siddiqs*), witnesses (*shahids*) and the virtuous (*salihs*).

THE THIRTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

Do not make any effort to appropriate any blessing, nor to ward off any calamity. The blessing will come to you if it is destined for you, whether you seek it or dislike it, and the

calamity will overtake you if it is destined for you, whether you dislike it and try to ward it off by prayer, or confront it with your patience and fortitude in order to earn the pleasure of the Lord.

You should surrender yourself in everything so that He may do His work through you. If it is a blessing be engaged in thanksgiving and if it is a calamity either exhibit patience or try to cultivate patience and alliance with God and His pleasure or try to feel His blessing in this or be merged in Him through this as far as you can afford, by means of spiritual states which are given to you, and in which you are being turned over again and again, and in which you are made to journey from stage to stage in your way towards God to obey and befriend Whom you are commanded, so that you may meet the Great Friend.

You will then be made to stand at a place which has been reached before by the *siddiqs* and *shahids* and *salihs*. That is to say, you will attain to extreme nearness to God so that you may observe the position of those who have gone before you to the heavenly King, the Lord of Glory and Mighty Kingdom, and who have attained nearness to Him and received from Him every kind of amenity and joy and security and honour and blessing. And let the calamity visit you and do not obstruct its way nor confront it with your prayer nor feel uneasy over its coming and approaching you, because its fire is not more terrible than the flames of the Hell fire.

It is reliably related in the traditions about the best of mankind and the best of those whom the earth carried on its surface and the sky covered with its shade, I mean the Prophet Muhammad (the chosen one), that he said:

Verily the fire of Hell will speak to the believer saying: "Pass hurriedly along, O believer, because your light is extinguishing my flame."

Now, is the light of a believer which extinguishes the flame of Hell not the same which is to be found with him in this

world and which distinguishes those who obey God from those who disobey? Let the same light extinguish the flame of calamity and let the coolness of your patience and harmony with God extinguish the heat of what is going to overtake you.

Thus the calamity has not come to you to crush you but to try you and to confirm the correctness of your faith and to strengthen the foundation of your convictions and to give you inwardly the good news from your Lord about His kind thoughts for you. God says:

> *And certainly We shall try you, till We know those among you who strive hard, and the steadfast, and manifest your news* (47:31)

Thus when you faith with God is proved and you have been quite in harmony with His work with certainty, and all this with the help of the power given by Him and of His benevolent help, then you should always remain patient and be in complete harmony with Him and in fullest obedience to Him. Do not allow anything to happen in yourself nor in others which may go against the commandments and prohibitions of God. And when any of His commandments comes, listen to it with attention, and be quick to act upon it, and be on the move and do not remain inactive, and do not remain passive before the decree of Providence and its act; but employ your power and efforts to fulfil the commandment.

Then if you find yourself unable to carry out the order, do not lose time in repairing to God. Seek His refuge and humble yourself before Him and ask His forgiveness and try to find out the cause of your inability to carry out His order and being prevented from being honoured by your obedience to Him. Possibly this inability is due to the evil of your disobedience to Him or to your pride or to your reliance on your own resources and powers or to your being conscious of your own action or to your associating your own self or the creation with Him, as a result of which He has kept you away from His door and

dismissed you from obedience to Him and from His service and shut you out from the help of His strength and turned away from you His benign face and become angry with you and estranged from you and kept you occupied with your trials of the world and with your passions and your vice and your desire. Do you not know that all these things make you oblivious of your Lord and make you fall away from the sight of Him who has created you and nourished you and blessed you with so many gifts? Beware lest these things which are besides God should divert you from your Lord. Everything which is not God is besides God, so do not accept any other thing in preference to Him, because He has created you for His own sake. So do not be unjust to your own soul so as to be preoccupied with things other than His commandments, because that will cause you to enter the fire, of which the fuel will be men and stones and then you will be sorry, but your sorrow will not benefit you and you will make excuses but no excuse will be accepted, and you will cry for help but no help will be forthcoming, and you will try to please God but without any success, and you will try to come back to the world to take stock of experiences and to mend matters but you will not be allowed to return.

Take pity on your soul and be kind to it and bring into use all the instruments for the service of your Lord, such as your intelligence and faith and spiritual enlightenment and knowledge which have been given to you; and seek to illumine your surrounding with the light proceeding from these in the midst of the darkness of destiny and hold fast to the injunctions and prohibitions of God and traverse, under the direction provided by these two, the path towards your Lord and surrender whatever is besides these two to Him Who has created you and caused you to grow; and do not be ungrateful to Him Who has created you from dust and then from a small life-germ, then He made you a perfect man. And do not wish for anything which is besides His commandment and do not consider anything bad unless it is His prohibition. Remain contented with regard to this world and the

hereafter with the former object in view. And despise, with regard to both of them, the latter. Thus everything that may be desired by you should be subservient to the former object and everything despised should be subordinated to the latter hateful thing. When you are in harmony with His commandment the whole universe will pay homage to you and when you despise what has been prohibited by him, displeasure will run away from you wherever you may happen to remain. God has said in His Book:

> *O children of Adam, I am God; there is no other deity besides Me, I say to a thing "Be" and it comes to exist. Obey Me; I will make you such that you will say to a thing "Be" and it will be there.*

He also said:

> *O earth, whoever serves Me, serve him and whoever serves you keep him worried.*

So when His prohibition comes, you should become like one who has become loose and tired in his joints and has lost all physical reactions, — a man with a bruised heart, contracted breast and spiritless body without any desire and purpose, freed from all impression of the material world, cut off from all and devoid of all signs of animal life and marks of animal desires, — like a dark courtyard and a dilapidated, uninhabited building with its roof fallen down, without any perception and any traces of animal existence. You should become like one who is deaf even from his birth, and your eyes should be like that of a person who is blindfolded and born blind and your lips should be as if they are full of sores and are swollen; and your tongue should be as if it is dumb and coarse and your teeth should be as if they have pus in their roots and are full of pain and disintegrated; and your two hands should be as if they are paralysed and incapable of holding anything and your feet should be as if they are stricken and trembling and full of wounds; and your sex organ should be as if it has lost all power and is engaged in other

things, and your stomach should be as if it is full and indifferent to food, and your understanding as if it is mad and your body should be as if it is dead and carried to the grave.

So you should listen and carry out quickly the commandments of God just as you should feel lazy and hesitant and slothful in matters of prohibition and behave like a dead man and be resigned to the decree of God. So drink this syrup and take this remedy and have this diet so that you may be free from the desires of the flesh, be cured of the diseases of sin and be free from the bondage of desires and thus be restored to perfect spiritual health.

THE FOURTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

O you slave of your passions! do not claim for yourself the position of the people of God. You serve your passions and they are worshippers of the Lord. Your desire is the world and the desire of these people is the hereafter. You see this world and they see the Lord of the earth and the Heavens. Your comfort lies in the creation and the comfort of these people lies in God. Your heart is bound with what is in this earth and the hearts of these people with the Lord of Divine throne. You are the victim of whatever you see and they do not see what you see, but they see the Creator of the things, Who cannot be seen (by these eyes). These people achieve the object of their life and secure salvation for themselves, whereas you remain pawned to your desires of this world.

These people vanish from the creation and from their desires of the world and their wishes, and thus they secure an access to the Great Master Who gives them strength to achieve the end of their existence, such as obedience and praise of the Lord. This is the favour of God; He gives it to whomever He likes. They made this obedience and praise incumbent on themselves and persevered therein with the help of the strength

and ease, given by Him, and this without experiencing any hardship. Thus obedience becomes their soul and food, so to speak.

Accordingly, the world becomes a blessing and an enjoyable thing for them, as if it is a veritable heaven, because when they see anything, before they see it, they see behind it the act of Him Who has created them. These people thus supply the staying power to the earth and the heavens, and comfort to the dead and the living, because their Lord has made them like pegs for the earth which He has spread. Thus everyone of them is like a mountain which stands firm. So keep away from their path and do not stand in the way of these people whom their parents and children have not been able to divert from their purpose. These people are the best among those whom the Lord has created and spread in the world; peace of God be on them and His greetings and blessings as long as the earth and the heaven last.

THE FIFTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

I saw in a dream as if I were in a place like a mosque in which there were some people who kept aloof from the rest of humanity. I said to myself, "If so and so were present here he could have disciplined these people and given them proper guidance, etc.," and I thought of a certain man of virtue.

These people gathered round me and one of them said to me, "What is the matter with you? Why do you not speak?"

I said, "If you are pleased with me, I will." Then I said: "When you have stood aloof from the people for the sake of truth, do not ask people for anything with your tongue. And when you have stopped asking so, do not ask from them anything in your minds either, because asking in the mind is as good as asking with the tongue. Then know that God is every day in a new state of glory, in changing and altering and raising and lowering (people). Thus He raises some people to the

highest of heaven and He lowers others to the lowest depth of degradation. Then He threatens those He has raised to the highest of Heavens that He may lower them down to the lowest depth of degradation and gives them the hope that He will keep them and preserve them in the same state of exaltation, whereas He threatens those whom He has thrown to the lowest depth of degradation that He may leave them to abide in their abasement and holds out the hope to them that He may raise them to the highest of heavens." Then I woke up.

THE SIXTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

Nothing keeps you away from the favour of God and His direct blessing except your reliance on people, and means, and arts and crafts and earnings. Thus people become a barrier for you in getting to the livelihood sanctified by the practice of the Holy Prophet, that is, the earning. Thus so long as you remain with people, that is, if you hope for their gifts and favours and ask from them with expectation at their doors, you are associating God's creation with Him. You will accordingly be punished with the deprivation from a livelihood which is sanctioned by the practice of the Holy Prophet, that is, lawful earning of this world.

Then, when you have renounced your living with the people and your associating them with your Lord and have recourse to earning and the comfort of living on your earning, and then rely on earning and become contented with it and forget the favour of your Lord, you are again behaving like a polytheist and this polytheism is subtler than the previous one; so God will punish you and keep you away from His favour and His direct dealing with you.

Then when you have turned away from this position and have thrown away polytheism from your midst and discarded

your reliance on your earning, ability and power, you will see God, that He is the Giver of livelihood and Creator of causes of ease and Giver of strength for earning and Giver of power over everything good and that livelihood is in His hand, — sometimes He brings it to you through people by way of your asking from them at times of trial and struggle or through your asking from Him, the Mighty and Glorious, and at others through your earning by way of remuneration, and still at others through His spontaneous favour in such a way that you do not see the intervening cause and means.

Thus, turn towards Him and throw yourself before Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, when He lifts the veil that intervenes between you and His favour and opens the door of sustenance by His favour in every time of necessity, in proportion to the need of your circumstances, in the manner of a loving physician who is also a friend to the patient — and this as a protection from Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, in order to keep you clean from any inclination towards what is besides Him. Thus He pleases you by His favour.

So, when He removes from your heart every purpose and every desire and every pleasure and every object, there remains nothing in your heart except His purpose. When He wants to bring to you your allotted share which cannot escape from you and which is not meant for anyone else from among His creation, He will create in you a desire for that share and will direct it to you so it will reach you at the time of your need. Then He will give you strength to be grateful to Him and will give you the knowledge that it is from Him, and He will direct it to you and give it to you as your sustenance so that you may be grateful to Him and may recognise and know it. This will increase your desire for aloofness from people and distance from men and emptiness of your heart from whatever is besides Him.

Then when your knowledge has been strengthened, as also your certainty, and your heart has expanded and is

illumined, and your nearness to God and your position with Him and your trustworthiness and worthiness in the matter of guarding His secrets have been increased thereby, you will be given knowledge beforehand as to when your share will come to you as a sign in your favour and as an exaltation of your dignity. This is a favour from Him, and an act of kindness and a guidance. God says:

> *And We made it a guide for the children of Israel. And We made from among them leaders to guide by Our command when they were patient. And they were certain of Our messages.* (32:24).

And He also says:

> *And those who strive hard for Us, We shall certainly guide them in Our ways.* (29:69).
>
> God, the Exalted and Glorious also says:
>
> *And fear God and He will teach you, then He will invest you with the power of controlling the universe, with a clear permission, which will have no obscurity in it, and with clear signs which will be bright like the bright sun, and with sweet words which will be sweeter than all sweet things, and with true revelation without any ambiguity and will be free from any evil suggestion of the animal self and from the prompting of the devil, the accursed.*
>
> God says in one of His books:
>
> *O child of Adam, I am God. Nothing deserves to be worshipped except Me. I say to a thing "Be" and it comes into being. Obey Me, I will make you such that if you say to a thing "Be" it will likewise come into being. And He has done like this with many of His prophets and* awliya *and people specially favoured from among the children of Adam.*

THE SEVENTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (God be pleased with him) said:

When you are united with God, you attain to His nearness by His attraction and help; and the meaning of union with God is your going out of the creation and desire and purpose and becoming established in His action and His purpose without there being any movement in you or through you, in His creation unless it be with His order and action and command. This is the state of *fana* (annihilation) by which is meant union with God. But union with God, the Mighty, the Glorious, is not like union with anything in His creation, in an understandable and appointed manner:

> *Nothing is like Him; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.* (Qur'an, 42:11)

The Creator is above being similar to His creatures or bearing any resemblance to anything that He has made. Thus, union with Him is a thing which is well known to those people who have this experience of union, because of their realisation of it. Everyone of them has a different experience in this matter which is peculiar to himself and which cannot be shared by any other person.

With everyone among the prophets and the messengers and the saints (*awliya*) of God is to be found a secret which cannot be known by any other person, so much so that sometimes it so happens that the *murid* (spiritual pupil) holds a secret which is not known to the *shaikh* (the spiritual preceptor); and sometimes the *shaikh* holds a secret which is not known to the *murid* although the latter may in his spiritual journey have approached the very threshold of the door of the spiritual state of his *shaikh*. When the *murid* reaches the spiritual state of the *shaikh*, he is made to separate himself from the *shaikh* and he is cut off from him, and God becomes his guardian and He cuts him off from the creation altogether.

Thus the *shaikh* becomes like a wet nurse who has stopped suckling the baby after two years. No connection remains with the creation after the disappearance of low desires and human purpose. The *shaikh* is needed by him so long as he is infested with low desires and purposes which have to be crushed. But after the disappearance of these weaknesses of the flesh there remains no need of the *shaikh* because there remains no stain and no defect in the *murid*.

Thus when you unite with God as we have described, you will feel safe forever from whatever is besides Him. You will certainly see no existence at all besides His, either in profit or in loss or in gifts or with their withholding, in fear or in hope. You will find only Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, Who is worthy to be feared and worthy to be sought protection from. So keep on looking at His acts forever and expecting His order and remain engaged in obedience to Him, cut off from the whole of His creation whether of this world or of the hereafter. Let not your heart be attached to anything in His creation.

Consider the whole creation as a man who has been arrested by a king with a great kingdom, strong command, awe-inspiring might and power, then as if the same king has fettered his neck and legs and then crucified him on a pine tree on the bank of a big river, with huge waves and of great width and depth, and strong in current; and as if the same king then sits on a big throne of great height which it is difficult to reach and the king is armed heavily with arrows and spears and bows and various kinds of weapons of which a true estimate cannot be made by any but himself. Then, as if he starts throwing towards the crucified man anything that he likes from among those weapons. Can anyone admire a person who sees all these and then turns his sight away from the king and becomes devoid of fear of him and hope from him and fears instead the man crucified and hopes from him? Will the man who does this not be called in the judgment of the intelligent a foolish man, lacking comprehension, a lunatic, and a brute and not a man?

So, seek the protection of God from becoming blind after having possessed sight, and from being separated after being united, and from being taken afar after being near, and from going astray after having received guidance and from unbelief after having believed.

Thus the world is like the great flowing river, to which we have referred. Every day its water increases and it is the animal passion of mankind and the enjoyments which come to men from it. As for the arrows and various weapons, they are the trials which destiny brings to them. Thus, the predominant element in the worldly life of man is the trials and hardships and the sufferings and the struggles, and what they get as blessing and enjoyment is also guarded or surrounded by calamities.

When any intelligent man takes a critical view of the matter, if of course he possesses a certain knowledge of the reality, he will understand that there is no real life except the life hereafter. Thus the Holy Prophet has said: "There is no life except the life of the hereafter."

This is particularly true in the case of a believer. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of Allah) has said:

> "The world is a prison for the believer and a heaven for the unbeliever."

And he (on whom be peace and blessings of Allah) also said: "The man of virtue is bridled."

How can a comfortable life in this world be possible and desired in face of this? Thus, real comfort lies in the Glorious, and in being in harmony with Him and in throwing oneself in absolute surrender before Him. When you do this you will be free from this world and then will be lavished on you compassion and comfort and kindness and prosperity and the favour of God.

THE EIGHTEENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

It is a parting advice of mine to you whether friend or foe that you should not blame your Lord for what He does to you, and for His causing trials for you. Rather, you should give publicity to what good happens to you and to your thankfulness on that account. Your telling a lie in expression of your gratitude without any blessing is better than your stating a true fact and giving publicity to any grievance for your external circumstances. Who is there that is devoid of the blessings of God? God the Mighty and Glorious says:

> *And if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them* (14:34).

How many blessings there are with you and you do not recognise them! Do not feel comforted with anything in the creation and do not be in love with it and do not communicate to anyone the state of your affairs. Your love should rather be for the sake of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and your comfort should be in Him and your grievance against Him should be communicated only to Him.

You should look to nobody else, because in nothing else is there any harm or good, or any appropriation and renunciation or any honour or dishonour, or any elevation or fall, or any poverty or affluence, or any movement or pause. All things are the creation of God, and in the hand of God lies the source of their movement by His command and permission. They continue to exist up to a time appointed by Him. And everything exists according to a measure fixed by Him. Whatever He has made posterior can by no means be prior and whatever He has made prior can by no means be made posterior. If God intends any harm to you no one can avert it except He. And if He intends any good, no one can withhold His favour.

Thus, if you complain against Him while you are in comfort and enjoying some blessings, just desiring an increase in them and shutting your eyes to what is with you of blessing and comfort, considering them very poor, God will be angry with you and take these two things away from you and make your complaint real and double your trouble and intensify His chastisement and anger and hatred for you; and He will make you fall away from His sight.

Therefore, with utmost effort, beware of complaining even if your flesh is cut into pieces by means of scissors. Save yourself! Fear God! Fear God! Fear God! Make good your escape! Make good your escape! Beware! Beware!

Verily most of the various calamities that befall the son of Adam are due to complaint against his Lord. How can one complain against Him, and He is the most merciful of the merciful ones and the best of all judges; Patient, Aware, Compassionate, Merciful, Kind towards His servants; He is not unjust to His servants and is like a patient, affectionate, loving, kind physician who is also a kinsman (to the patient). Can any fault be found in an affectionate kind-hearted father or mother?

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "God is more merciful towards His servant than a mother is towards her son."

O poor man ! show good manners to the utmost. Exhibit patience at the time of calamity, even if you become exhausted by patience. Hold on to patience even if you get exhausted through your cheerful submission to, and harmony with God. Hold on to cheerful resignation to, and concord with Him. Remain ever pleased and get reconciled.

If your self still remains in existence, vanish it out and bring death over it. When you are thus lost, O you philosopher's

stone! where will you be obtained? Where will you be found? Have you not heard the word of God:

> *Fighting is enjoined on you, though it is disliked by you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allah knows while you know not.* (2: 216).

The knowledge of the reality of things has been kept rolled away from you and you have been screened away from it. So do not show bad manners in disliking or liking it. Follow the Law in all that may happen to you if you are in a state of piety (*salih*) which is the first step, and follow the commandment in the state of *wilayat* and in the state of dying out of the existence of desire and do not go beyond this. This is the second step. Be pleased with the action of God and be reconciled to it and vanish into the state of the *abdal* and the *ghauth* and the *siddiq* and these are the final stages. Keep clear out of the way of destiny and do not stand in its way and curb yourself and your desire, and restrain your tongue from complaint.

Then when you have done this, if the destiny is good, your Lord will give you more good, and an enjoyable and happy life. And if it is a bad one, God will protect you in the course of it through your obedience to Him and will keep away from you all blame and will keep you lost in it until the time it passes away from you and the point of the ripeness of time also passes — just as the night passes into the day and the coldness of winter passes and merges into the summer. Here is an example for you and you should take lesson from it.

Again, in the self of man there are various kinds of sins and faults and blemishes on account of which he is unworthy of the company of God, unless he becomes purged of impurities and sins; and no one can kiss His threshold except those who are purified from the dirt of self-conceit, just as no one can be worthy of the company of kings except those who are cleansed

of impurities and bad smell and dirt. Thus calamities are atonements and purifiers. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said: "The fever of one day is an atonement for the sins of a whole year."

THE NINETEENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

While you are weak in faith, certainly if a promise is made to you it is fulfilled and it is not broken lest your faith should be diminished thereby or your certainty vanish. But when this faith and certainty are strengthened and established in your heart and you are addressed by His word:

> *Surely thou art in Our presence today dignified, trusted.* (The Qur'an, 12:54),

and this address is repeated to you many times, then you become among the selected ones, rather the select among the selected ones, and there does not remain any will of yours nor any purpose nor any action which you like, nor any nearness which you notice, nor any position which you may covet so that your ambition rises towards it.

Then you become like a holed vessel in which no liquid can stay, so that no purpose and no habit and no determination for anything of this world or of the other can stay in you and you become cleansed from everything which is besides God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and you are made fit to be pleased with God, and you are promised the pleasure of God with you and endowed with the grace to enjoy and feel blessed with all the actions of God.

Then you will be given a promise and when you feel satisfied with it and any sign of will is found in you, you are transferred from this promise towards another which is higher than this; and you are turned towards one which is more honourable and you are rewarded with a feeling of self-sufficiency with regard to the first and the doors of knowledge

will be opened to you; and you will be enlightened concerning the mysteries of Divine affairs and the truth of wisdom and the deeper purpose in changing the previous promise into the one which followed and in your new position you will experience an increase in the preservation of (your spiritual) state (*hal*).

Further, you will be granted a spiritual rank in which you will be entrusted with the preservation of secrets and you will experience an increase in the expansion of your breast and enlightenment of your heart and the eloquence of your tongue and high degree of knowledge and love instilled in you. Thus you will be made a beloved of all people and of both men and the Jinn and those besides them in this world and the hereafter. When you become the beloved of God, the people are subordinate to God and their love is included in His love just as their hatred is included in His hatred.

And so you are made to attain this rank in which you will have no desire for anything at all.

After this, you will be made to desire for something and your desire for that thing will be removed and made to disappear and you will be turned away from it. Thus you will not be given that thing in this world and will be given in the hereafter something in its place which will increase your nearness to God, the Great, and that something will cool your eyes in the high heaven and the abode of paradise.

And if you have not asked for it, nor hoped for it, nor inclined towards it while in this world's life, which is a place of transience and sufferings, but the desire which you did indeed cherish while in this world's life and your object and purpose and goal was that Being Who creates and manifests and withholds and gives and has spread this earth and has held the sky high — if you have done so, you will also be given something in this world's life which will be equivalent to it, or may be inferior to it, after your heart has been broken by turning you away from that object and goal, and after the establishment in the after-life

of the thing which you will be given in exchange and which we have already described.

THE TWENTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

> "Discard whatever creates any doubt with regard to lawfulness and unlawfulness of a thing in your mind and adopt what does not cause any doubt in you."

When a doubtful thing becomes mixed up with a non-doubtful thing, adopt the course in which there is nothing of any doubt and suspicion and discard what causes any doubt. But when it is the case of a doubtful thing which is not free from hesitation and a consequent disturbance of mind such as is narrated in a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – "Sin creates disturbance in the heart" – wait in a case like this for the inner command. Then if you are commanded to adopt it, do as you like, but if you are forbidden, then refrain and let the thing be to you as if it had never been and never existed and turn towards the door of God and seek from your Lord your sustenance.

If you feel exhausted with patience and concord and cheerful surrender and immersion (*fana*), remember that He, the Mighty and Glorious, does not stand in need of being reminded, and He is not forgetful of you and others besides you; He, the Mighty, the Glorious, feeds the unbelievers and the hypocrites and those who have turned away from His obedience. How is it possible that He would forget you, O you believer, who believe in His oneness, and persist in obedience to Him and are firm in carrying out His orders day and night?

Another saying of the Holy Prophet, namely, "Discard what raises doubt in your mind and adopt what does not raise any," means that you should leave what is in the hands of people

and not seek it and should not set your heart at it and not expect anything from people nor fear them and should receive from the favour of God, and this is what will not cause you any doubt, therefore, let there be only one from whom to ask and one giver and one purpose and this should be your Lord, the Mighty, the Glorious, in Whose hands lie the forehead of kings and hearts of people which are the kings of the bodies — that is to say, the hearts have control of the bodies — the bodies and the money of the people belong to Him, and the people are His agents and trustees, and when they give you anything the movement of their hands is by His permission and command and His motion, and the same is the case of any gift being withheld from you.

God the Mighty says:
Ask Allah of His grace. (4:32)

He also says:
Surely they whom you serve besides Allah control no sustenance for you; so seek sustenance from Allah and serve Him and be grateful to Him. (Qur'an, 29:17)

He has also said:
When My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliants when he calls on Me. (Qur'an, 2:186)

He says too:
Pray to Me, I will answer you. (Qur'an, 40:60)

He also says:
Surely Allah is the Bestower of sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong, (Qur'an, 51:58)

Still further He says:

Surely Allah, gives to whom He pleases without measure. (Qur'an, 3:36)

THE TWENTY-FIRST DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

I saw Satan, the accursed, in a dream as if I were in a big crowd and I intended to kill him. He said to me, "Why are you going to kill me and what is my sin? If Providence sets the evil in motion I have no power to change it and transform it into good. And if Providence sets the good in motion I have no power to change and transform it into evil. And what is there in my hand?

And I found his appearance resembling that of a eunuch, soft in speech, a line of hairs fringing his chin, miserable looking and ugly-faced, as if he was smiling before me, full of shame and fear. And this was on the night of Sunday twelfth Dhul Hijjah in the year 401 of Hijrah.

THE TWENTY-SECOND DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

It is a practice of God to try His believing servant in proportion to his faith. Thus if a person's faith is great and immense, his trial is also great. Thus the trial of a *rasul* is greater than that of a *nabi*, because his faith is greater than that of the latter. And the trial of the *nabi* is greater than that of a *badal* (*abdal*). Similarly, the trial of a *badal* is greater than that of a *wali*. Everyone is tried according to his faith and certainty. The authority for this lies in a saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him): "Verily, we, the community of prophets are the most tried of all people."

Furthermore, God keeps the trials in continuance for these honourable leaders according to their grades, so that they may always remain in His presence and may never slacken in their wakefulness. He, the Exalted, loves them and they are the people of love and the beloved of God and the lover never likes to be away from his beloved.

Thus, the trials are the restrainers of their hearts and a kind of imprisonment for their souls and keep them restrained from inclination towards anything which is not the object of their life, and from feeling comfortable and inclined to anything besides their Creator. So, when this becomes their permanent feature and their desires get melted and their selves become broken and the truth becomes distinguished from falsehood, then their designs and purposes and will and inclination towards all enjoyments and comforts of this life and of the hereafter become withdrawn and contracted in a corner of their mind; and the solace of their mind comes to rest in the promise of God and their pleasure in His decree and their contentment in His gift and their patience in His trial and they become safe from the evil of His creation; and all this to the extent of their heart's desire.

Thus will the power of the heart be strengthened and it will acquire control over all the organs of the body, because trials and calamities strengthen the heart and certainty and establishes the faith and patience and weakens the animal self and its desires. Because when suffering comes and the believer exhibits patience and pleasure and spirit of surrender to the act of God and gratitude towards Him, God becomes pleased with him and there comes to him help and abundance and strength. God the Mighty and Glorious says:

If you are grateful, I will give you more. (Qur'an, 14:7)

And when the self of man moves the heart in search of any object of desire and any enjoyment, and the heart responds to this demand for the object and this without any command from God and His permission, the result is forgetfulness of God and polytheism and sin. God seizes them (the mind and the heart) with ignominy and calamities and subjection to people and injury and anxiety and pain and disease.

The heart and the mind are affected by this suffering, but if the heart does not respond to the call of the mind in regard to its object until permission comes from God through *ilham* (major

revelation) in the case of a *rasul* and a *nabi*, and action is taken on this revelation whether it is the bestowal of a gift or its withholding, God rewards the mind and the heart with mercy and blessing and comfort and pleasure and light and knowledge and nearness to Himself and independence from needs and safety from calamities. So know all this and remember it and save yourself from trial with extreme carefulness by not making haste in responding to the call of the mind and its desire, but wait patiently in such cases for the permission of the Master so that you may remain safe in this world and the hereafter.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Stick to, and be contented with the little that you have with utmost effort, until the decree of fate reaches its culmination and you are lifted towards a higher and finer state, in which you will be made to abide and be kept secure from the hardships of this world's life and of the hereafter and from evil sequel and transgression. Then you will be made to rise towards what will please your eyes and will be all the more enjoyable. Know that you will not be lost your portion by your want of seeking for it, neither will that which is not your portion be obtained by you through your greedy efforts and attempts for it. So hold your patience and stick with satisfaction to your present condition and be contented with it. You should not take anything by yourself nor give anything by yourself unless and until you are commanded.

Do not move on your own nor rest on your own, because if you do so you will be tried by a condition worse than yours in the creation, because by such a lapse you will be doing injustice to yourself and God is not unmindful of the unjust. God says:

> *And thus do We make some of the iniquitous to befriend others.* (Qur`an, 6:130)

Know that you are in the house of a King Whose command is great, Whose power is immense, Whose army is

huge, Whose will is in force, Whose order is irresistible, Whose kingdom is everlasting, Whose sovereignty is abiding, Whose knowledge is subtle, Whose wisdom is deep, Whose judgment is absolutely equitable and from Whom not even an atom can be hidden either in the earth or in the heaven, nor can the injustice of the unjust person remain concealed. Keep in mind also that while you are the most unjust one and the greatest offender because, moved by your animal passion, you have taken the initiative in your own self and in the creation of God and thereby indirectly you have ascribed a partner to him. God says:

> *Surely Allah forgives not that a partner be set up with Him, and He forgives all besides that to whom He pleases* (4:48).

Keep away from associating anything with God with utmost effort and do not go near this sin and shun it in all your movements and restful conditions, during the night as well as during the day, both in moments of solitude and when you are in company. Beware of sin in all its forms, in all the organs of your body and in your heart. And shun sin, what appears on the surface as well as what remains hidden. Do not run away from God for He will overtake you. Do not dispute with Him in His decree, for then He will crush you; do not blame Him in regard to His order, for then He will abase you. Do not remain forgetful of Him for then He will forget you and will involve you in troubles, and do not create any innovation in His house, for then He will destroy you. Do not introduce anything in His religion prompted by your low desires, for then He will cause you to perish and will make your heart dark and will snatch away from you your faith and your spiritual knowledge, and will give your devil and your animal self and your low desires and passions and people of your family and your neighbours and your friends and your associates and the rest of His creation, even the scorpions of your house and its serpents and its Jinns and the rest of the venomous reptiles of it, — power over you, and thus He will

make your life in this world dark and will prolong your punishment in the hereafter.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Keep away from disobedience to God, the Exalted, the Glorious with utmost effort, and cling to His door with truth. Apply all your power and effort in obeying Him with apologies and entreaties and show your neediness in utmost submissiveness and humility, in silence and with downcast look, not looking at people, nor following your animal desires, nor seeking any recompense whether of this world or of the hereafter, nor yet any promotion to higher positions and honourable stations. Know it for certain that you are His servant, and that the servant and all that he possesses belongs to his Master, so that he cannot claim anything as against Him. Observe good manners and do not blame your Master. Everything is in an appointed measure with Him. What He puts forward no one can push back and whatever He keeps back no one can push forward. In this way God acquits Himself with regard to your affairs. He has given you the abode of permanence in the Hereafter and made you the master of it and will bestow on you such gifts in the Hereafter as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has felt. God says:

> *So no soul knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them: a reward for what they did* (32:17),

that is, a reward for their actions in this world in carrying out the injunctions, and in exhibiting patience in eschewing what is forbidden, and in surrendering and making oneself completely over to Him in all that is decreed by Him and in reconciling oneself to Him in all affairs.

But as for him whom God has given worldly things and made him master of them and blessed him in them and conferred His favour, He has done so because the position of this man's

faith is like a barren and hard land in which it is not possible for water to stay, nor for trees, crops and fruits to grow. Then He casts in it various kinds of manure and similar things which cause the plants and trees to grow, and these are the world and its materials, in order to secure by these what He has grown in it of the tree of faith and plant of deeds. If, however, these things are removed from it, the ground, the plants and the trees will be dried and the fruit will drop and the whole countryside will be desolate. And God, the Mighty and Glorious, wants it to be populated and to be in a flourishing condition.

Thus the tree of faith in a rich man is weak of growth in its root and is empty of what fills the tree of your faith, O Dervish, whereas the strength of the other thing and its continuity of existence depend on the world and its various amenities that you see with its possessor, and there is nothing with him more preferable to what I have described to you. May God give us and you power to achieve what He loves and is pleased with, by His kindness. Thus the strength and the continuity of the provisions of this world that you find with him together with various blessings, — if these things are removed from him while the tree is weak, the tree will be dried up and this rich man will become an unbeliever and will join the company of hypocrites and apostates and unbelievers; o my God, unless You send to this rich man armies of patience and cheerful forbearance and certainty and knowledge and various kinds of spiritual enlightenment and thereby strengthen his faith. Then of course he will not mind the disappearance of wealth and blessings.

THE TWENTHY-FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Do not say, O penniless man! from whom the world and its people have turned their face. O man, who is without any fame, who is hungry and thirsty, whose body is bare of clothes, whose liver is parched, who wanders about in every corner of the world in every mosque and in every desolate place, and is turned

away from every door and deprived of every object and is broken down, and who is fed up and disappointed with all the desires and longings of his heart; do not say that God has made you powerless and taken away the world from you and brought about your fall and forsaken you, and has become your enemy and made you distracted and has not given you any composure of mind and abased you, and has not given you enough in this world and has reduced you to obscurity and has not made your name exalted among people and among your brothers while He has given others plenty of His blessings so that they are passing their nights and days in comfort and made them superior to you and to the people of your house, whereas both of you are Muslims and believers and have your common mother in Eve and common father in Adam, the best of mankind.

Well, God has dealt with you in this manner because your nature is pure and the moisture of the mercy of God is to come to you incessantly in the form of patience and cheerful surrender, and certainty and reconcilement and knowledge. The light of faith and of monotheism is to be heaped on you. Then the tree of your faith and its root and its seed will be established and it will become firm and full of foliage and will bear fruit and will be growing and spreading out branches and causing shade and shooting forth twigs. Thus everyday it will be on the increase and will grow and will not need any manure to help its growth and development. The thing which God has allotted to you will come to you in due time whether you welcome it or are averse to it. So you should not be greedy for what will presently be yours and do not be anxious for it. And do not feel sorry for what is meant for another person and not you.

. What is not in your possession must be either of the two; (1) either it will be yours or (2) it will be another person's. Now if it is yours it will come to you and you will be drawn towards it and the meeting will take place very soon. And if it is not yours, you will be turned away from it and it will turn away from you, and so there will be no meeting between you and the thing. So be

occupied in the best manner with what you are after in the time present before you in obeying your Lord and do not raise your head and do not pay any heed towards what is besides Him. God says:

> *And strain not your eyes towards that with which We have provided different classes of them (of) the splendour of this world's life, that We may thereby try them. And the sustenance of thy Lord is better and more abiding* (20:131).

So, certainly, God has forbidden you to pay attention to anything else but that on which He has maintained you and has given you your provision of obedience and has bestowed on you out of His allottment and provisions and favour. He has warned you that whatever is besides these is a trial with which He has been trying them (others) and that your cheerful acceptance of your portion is better for you and purer and preferable. So let this be your way and resort and stay, and your inner and outer characteristics, and your objective and your desire and longing through which you will attain every object and reach every station and attain every good and blessing, freshness and joy and everything nice. God has said:

> *No soul knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them: a reward for what they did.* (32:17).

So there is no deed beyond the five prescribed ways of service and eschewing of all the sins, and there is nothing great and more honourable and more liked by and pleasing to God than what we have mentioned for you already. May God give you and us the power to do what is liked by Him and is pleasing to Him, by His favour.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The veil and screen from your self will not be removed unless you get out of the creation and turn the back of your heart

against them in all conditions of life, and unless your desires vanish and then your purpose and your longings and your ego disappear from the existence of this world and of the hereafter and become like a holed vessel; and nothing remains in you of purpose except the purpose of your Lord; and you are filled with the light of your Lord and there remains no place and room in your heart except for your Lord; and you become the gatekeeper of your heart and you are given the sword of monotheism and greatness and power. Then whatever you see approaching the gate of your heart from the atmosphere of your mind, you will remove its head from its shoulder, so that there remains not for your self and your desire and your purpose and your longing of this world and of the hereafter anything with its head raised, nor any word that is listened to, nor any opinion which is followed, except obedience to the commandment of the Lord and standing by Him, and cheerful acceptance of His decree, and more than that, merging in His decree and allottment. Thus you become the servant of the Lord and not the servant of the people and their opinion.

And when this becomes a permanent feature in your life, curtains of self-respect will be hung around your heart and trenches of dignity will be dug round it, and the power of greatness will surround it, and your heart will be guarded by the army of truth and monotheism. Besides this, guards of truth will be posted near it, so that people may not have any access to it through the devil, through your animal self, through passion, through purpose, through vain desires and false claims growing in the minds of people, and through misguidance growing from desires.

If it is destined that people will come to you in unbroken succession, and they will be unanimous in regard to your greatness so that they may obtain dazzling light and clear signs and deep wisdom, and see evident miracles and supernatural happenings as a regular feature of your life and thereby increase in their efforts to be near God and to be obedient to Him and also

increase in their effort for the service of their Lord, even when all these things happen, you will be made secure from all of them and from the inclination of your human spirit towards desire, from self-admiration and vanity and importance attendant on a large number of people coming to you and on their being attentive to you.

Similarly, if it is destined that you shall have a wife, beautiful and graceful, responsible for her own self and for her own maintenance, you will be made secure from her evil and will be saved from carrying her burden and that of her retainers and relations, and she will be for you a gift of God, sufficient, blessed and harmonious in temperament and clean from insincerity and evil-mindedness and fraud and malice, and breach of trust in your absence. Thus, she will be in your subjection. Then she and her relations will make you free from the burden of her maintenance and will ward off from you any trouble on her account. And if it is destined that she will beget any child for you it will be a righteous and pure descendant who will be pleasing to your eyes. God says: *And We made his wife fit for him* (21:90).

> He further says:
> *O our Lord! grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes, and make us leaders for those who guard against evil* (25:74).
>
> Still further He says:
> *And make him, my Lord, acceptable to Thee.* (19:6).

Thus all these prayers which are in these verses will come into action and be accepted in your case, whether or not you address these prayers to God because as they are, they are meant for those who are worthy of them, and are favoured with these blessings, and are worthy of this position, and are established in this condition, and to whom the favour and nearness of God are allotted.

. Similarly, if it is destined that a certain thing of this world will come to you, it will not in such a case cause you any harm. Thus exactly what is your portion in it will come to you, purified for you sake by the act of God and His will and the issue of order for its reaching you. So it will reach you and you will be rewarded, provided you get it in obedience to His command, just as you will be rewarded on performing obligatory prayer and observing obligatory fast. And you will be commanded with regard to what is not your portion that you should spend it on those who deserve it from among your friends and neighbours and the deserving among the beggars and on those who deserve Zakat money according to the needs of the circumstances. The actual state of affairs will be revealed to you and you will be able to distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving ones. Hearsay reports cannot be as good as actual experience. Then, you will be white and clear in your affair on which there will be no obscurity, no ambiguity, no confusion, no doubt.

Therefore, take to patience, cultivate cheerful submission, pay regard to the present, take to obscurity, remain quiet, remain composed, remain silent, remain silent! Beware! Make good your escape! Make good your escape! Make haste! Make haste! Fear God! And again, fear God! Cast down your look! Cast down your look! Turn away your eyes! Turn away your eyes! Be modest till the destiny reaches its appointed time and you are taken by your hand and brought to the forefront.

Then will be removed from you all that you feel heavy, after which you will be made to plunge into an ocean of favours and kindness and mercy and will be clothed with the robe of light and Divine secrets and rare divine knowledge. Then you will be made near and spoken to, and given gifts, and made free from need and made courageous and exalted, and addressed with the words: *Surely you are in Our presence today, dignified, trusted* (12:54).

Then guess and estimate from the condition of Joseph, the truthful. when he was addressed in these words through the tongue of the King of Egypt who was also its chief and Pharaoh. Apparently it was the tongue of the King that was speaking and expressing them but in fact the speaker was God, Who was speaking through the tongue of knowledge. To Joseph was given the material kingdom, which was the kingdom of Egypt, as also the kingdom of the spirit which was the kingdom of knowledge, spiritual and intellectual, and nearness to God, and distinction and high position before God. Thus it is that God says:

> *And thus did We give to Joseph power in the land – he had mastery in it wherever he liked* (12:56).

The land here stands for Egypt. With regard to the kingdom of spirit, God says:

> *Thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency. Surely he was one of Our sincere servants* (12:24).

With regard to the kingdom of knowledge, He says:

> *This is of what my Lord has taught me. Surely I have forsaken the religion of a people who believe not in Allah,* (12:37).

When you are thus addressed, O truthful one, you are given an ample share of great knowledge and blessed with strength and goodness and power and general saintliness and an order which affects the spiritual as well as the non-spiritual things. You are also vested with the power of creation with the permission of God, of things in this world even before the coming of the hereafter. Then, in the hereafter, you will be in the abode of peace and in high paradise. The sight of the countenance of God will be an additional thing and a favour and it is an objective which has no limit and no end.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Regard good and evil as two fruits coming out from two ranches of a single tree. One of the two branches yields sweet uit and the other bitter. So you leave cities and countries and ie outlying part of countries where fruits plucked from this tree re sent, and keep away from them and their people. Approach ie tree itself and become its guard and attendant servant and cquire knowledge of these two branches and of the two fruits nd their neighbourhoods and remain near the branch which ields sweet fruit. Then, it will be your food and your source of trength and beware lest you should approach the other branch nd eat the fruit of it lest its bitterness should kill you. When you ersist in this attitude you will be in ease and security and safety rom all troubles because troubles and all kinds of calamities are orn of this bitter fruit. When you are away from this tree and vander about in countries and these fruits are brought before you and they are mixed up in a manner that the sweet cannot be distinguished from the bitter and you start eating them, your hand may fall on the bitter and you may put it in your mouth and eat a part of it and chew it so that its bitterness goes to your palate, and then to your throat and further to your brain and nostrils and spreads its effect on you as far as your veins and the organs of your body and you are thus killed. Your throwing away the remainder from your mouth and washing off its effect cannot take away from you what has already spread in your body and will not benefit you.

If, in the beginning you eat the sweet fruit and its sweetness spreads to different parts of your body and you have been benefitted by it and have become happy, even this is not enough for you. It is inevitable that you will eat another fruit and you cannot be sure that this other one will not be bitter; so you will experience what I have already mentioned to you.

Thus, it is no good to be far from the tree and to be ingnorant of its fruit; and safety lies in being near to it and in standing by it. So good and evil are both acts of God, the Mighty, the Glorious. *Allah has created you and what you make.* (37:96)

· The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said: "God has created the man who slaughters as well as the animal slaughtered."

The actions of God's servant are His creation as also the fruit of that labour. God, the Mighty, the Glorious, has said:

Enter the Garden for what you did. (16:32).

Glory be to Him, how generous and merciful of Him! He ascribes the actions to them and says that their entry into paradise is on account of their deeds whereas these deeds owe their existence to His help and mercy. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said: "No one enters paradise on account of his own deeds."

He was asked: "Not even you, O Prophet of God?"

He said: "Yes, not even I, unless God covers with His mercy."

While saying this He placed his hand on his head.

· This is narrated in one of the narrations of Ayisha (God be pleased with her).

Thus, when you are obedient to God in carrying out His behest and refraining from what He has forbidden, be resigned to Him in what He has appointed; He will protect you from His evil and increase His good to you and will protect you from all evils, religious and worldly. As for worldly things, there is a word of God:

Thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency. Surely he was one of Our sincere servants (Qur'an, 12:24).

And as for religion, He says:

Why should Allah chastise you if you are grateful and believe? (4:147).

Indeed, what will a calamity do to a person who is a believer and grateful? He is nearer to safety than to calamity in as much as he is in a state of plenty because of his gratefulness. God says:

If you are grateful, I will give you more (14:7).

Thus your faith will quench the fire in the hereafter — the fire which will be the punishment of every sinner. How can it be then that it will not quench the fire of calamity in this life, O my God, unless it is some servant in a state of spiritual ecstasy and who has been selected for *wilayat* and for Divine choice. In such a case calamities are inevitable, but these are to make him free from the abomination of passions and low inclination of nature, and from relying upon the desires of the flesh and its enjoyments, and from being contented with people and from the pleasure felt in their nearness and from living with them and from feeling pleased with them. So he is tried until all these weaknesses depart from him and his heart is purified by the expulsion of the whole lot of them, so that what remains in it is unity of the Lord and knowledge of truth, and it becomes the landing place of many kinds of secrets from the unseen and knowledge and light of nearness. This is because it is a house in which there is no room for two. As God says:

Allah has not made for any man two hearts within him (33:4).

Again:
Surely the kings, when they enter a town, ruin it and make the noblest of its people to be low. (27:34).

Then they turn out the nobles from their good position and comfortable life. The sovereignty over the heart was (in the beginning), of the devil of desires and selfishness, and the organs and the faculties used to be moved by their order for various sins, vanities and trifles. This sovereignty now vanishes and the organs become restful and the house of the king becomes clear, and the courtyard, which is the breast, becomes clean. The heart has now become clean and has become the habitation of the unity of God and of knowledge, and as for the courtyard it has become the alighting ground of wonderful things from the unseen. All this is the result of calamities and trials and their fruit. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "We, prophets, are beset with the greatest number of trials among people, then others and still others, according to rank."
>
> He has also said:
>
> "I know more of God than any of you, and am more afraid of Him than any of you."

Anyone who is near the king must have his danger and guardedness increased of necessity because he is in the presence of the King from Whose observation nothing is now hidden of his manipulations and movements.

Now, if you say that the whole creation in the sight of God is like one man, that nothing of it remains hidden from Him, what then is the good of this statement? The answer is that when a person's position is raised and he is placed in an honourable rank, risks also become great, because it becomes necessary for him to give thanks for what God has conferred on him, in the shape of various blessings and favours. So that the slightest diversion from service to Him is a default in gratitude to Him and is a shortcoming in one's obedience to Him. Thus God says:

O wives of the Prophet! whoever of you is guilty of manifestly improper conduct, the chastisement shall be doubled for her (33:30).

God says this to these ladies on account of His having completed His blessings on them by bringing them in contact with the Holy Prophet. What then will be the position of one who is attached to God and is near Him? God is far too high and above all similitude with His creation:

Nothing is like Him; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing (42:11).

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

So you wish for comfort and joy and happiness and safety and peace, to be blessed and carefree, while you are still in the crucible and in the course of killing your animal self, and are in the midst of a struggle with your desires and that of removing your objects, and with the hope of returns in this world and in the hereafter and the remnant of these still remains with you in a very potent form? O hasty one! halt and walk slowly; O you expectant one ! the door is closed till this state continues. Surely some remnants of these things are still in you and some small particles of it are still in you. It is the emancipation contract of a slave; so long as even a penny is left in it, you are shut out from it. So long as there remains with you the measure of sucking the stone of a date from this world and from your desire and purpose and longing and from your seeing anything of this world or seeking anything or liking anything from the returns of this world or the hereafter — so long as anything among these things persists in you, you are still at the door of self-annihilation. You have to stop here until you acquire the annihilation completely and perfectly and then you are taken out of the crucible and your seasoning is complete, and you are adorned with ornaments and dressed and perfumed and incensed, then you are taken to the great King and addressed with the words:

> *Surely thou art in Our presence today dignified, trusted* (12:54).

Then you will be provided with comforts and shown gentleness and fed with His favour and also given drink and you will be made near and will be enlightened on secrets which will not be hidden from you. You will be made free from want on account of what you will be given out of these things, free from the need of all things. Do you not see the pieces of gold, of various shapes, changing and circulating, morning and evening, in the hands of druggists and green-grocers and butchers and tanners and oilmen and sweepers and people of various crafts, both very fine and lowly and dirty? Then these pieces are collected together and placed in the crucible of the goldsmith; they melt with the flames of fire, then they are taken out of the crucible and pounded and softened and seasoned to make them into ornaments, and polished and perfumed and then left in the best places and houses, behind locks, in treasures and boxes and dark places, or they are made to adorn the body of a bride and they are ornamented and given honour, and sometimes the bride may even be of a great king. Thus the pieces of gold pass from the hands of tanners to the presence of kings and to the court after being melted and pounded. In this way you, O believer, if you show patience regarding the enforcement of the allotment of Providence and give cheerful submission to His decree in every condition of life, you will be made near to your Lord in this world and you will be blessed with knowledge of Him and other kinds of knowledge, and secrets and will be given residence in the hereafter in the abode of peace with the Prophets and the *siddiqs* and the *shahids* and the *salihs* in the proximity of God and in His house and near Him, enjoying His kindness. So show patience and do not make haste, and remain pleased with the decree of Providence and do not complain against Him. If you do so, you will get the coolness of His forgiveness and the sweetness of knowledge about Him and His kindness and favour.

THE TWENTY-NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Regarding the saying of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "Poverty may well nigh lead to unbelief."

The servant believes in God and surrenders all his affairs to God; he has his faith in the easy providence of sustenance from Him and has also the firm conviction that whatever is to come to him can by no means escape him, and that whatever escapes him can by no means come to him and that:

> *Whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him. And gives him sustenance from whence he imagines not. And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him* (65:2,3).

He says all this while he is in a state of ease and comfort; then God tries him with calamity and poverty, so he takes to petition and humble entreaty; but He does not remove these things from him. It is then that the truth of the Holy Prophet's saying: "Poverty may well nigh lead to unbelief," becomes established. Then as for him with whom Allah deals gently, He removes from him what afflicts him and gives him comfort and affluence and gives him power to be thankful and to give praise to God and He continues doing so till the man meets Him. When Allah wants to try him, He perpetuates His calamity and poverty and cuts off from him the help of faith. Then he shows unbelief by finding fault with, and accusing God, and by doubting in His promise. So he dies an unbeliever in God, disputing His signs and feeling angry at his Lord. It is to such a man that the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) refers to in his saying:

> "Verily the man who is most severely punished of all people on the Day of Resurrection is one to whom God has given both poverty in this life and chastisement in

the hereafter. We ask the protection of God from such a plight."

The poverty spoken of in the saying is the one that makes man forgetful of God and it is from this that he has sought His protection. The other man whom God wants to choose and select and whom He has included among His favourites and friends and successors of His Prophets, and has marked out as chief of His *walis* and a great man among His servants and their learned men, and their intercessors and their guides towards their Master, and their instructors in the path of guidance and in avoiding the evil ways — to such a man He sends mountains of patience and occeans of the spirit of cheerful submission and reconcilement, and of total merging in the act of God. Then He confers on him abundantly of His gifts and nurtures him with lavish care during all hours of night and day, in company as well as in solitude, sometimes in open, sometimes in secret; in the latter case, with various kinds of kindness and affection; and these things he continues to get till the moment of his death.

THE THIRTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

How often you say, What shall I do and what means shall I adopt (for the attainment of my object)? So you are told — Stay at your own place and do not go beyond your limit till a way out comes to you from Him Who has commanded you to stay where you are. God says:

> *O you who believe, be steadfast and try to excel in steadfastness and guard the frontiers. And keep your duty to Allah.* (3:199)

He has commanded you to be patient, O believer, then to vie with one another in patience and to be steadfast and to remain on guard and to make this incumbent on yourself. He further warns you against discarding patience as contained in the words, *Be careful of your duty to God*, and this is in respect of

discarding this virtue. This means that you should not give up patience. Thus good and safety lie in patience The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "Patience stands in the same relation to faith as the head stands in relation to the body."

It is also said that for everything is a reward according to a measure but as for the reward of patience, it will be a price which has no measure. As God says:

> *Truly the steadfast will be paid their reward without measure.* (39:10)

So when you have been careful about your duty to Him in virtue of patience and in paying full regard to the limits set by God, He will reward you as He has promised you in His book:

> *And whoever keeps his duty to Allah, He ordains a way out for him. And gives him sustenance from whence he imagines not* (65: 2,3).

Remain patiently with those who trust in God till the way out comes to you because God has promised you sufficiency in His words:

> *And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him* (65:3).

Stick to patience and to trust in God in the company of those who do good to others as surely God has promised you rewards for this, as He says:

> *And thus do We reward those who do good to others* (6:85).

God will love you on account of this virtue, because He has said: *And Allah loves the doers of good (to others).* (3:133).

Thus, patience is the source of all virtues and all kinds of safety in this world and in the hereafter, and through it the believer rises to the state of cheerful surrender and reconcilement

to the will of God and then attains to the state of merging in the acts of God -- the state of *badaliyyat* or *ghaibat*. So beware that you do not miss it so that you may not be abased in this world and in the hereafter with the result that prosperity of both these passes away from you.

THE THIRTY-FIRST DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When you find in your heart any hatred or love for a person, examine his actions in the light of the Book of God and the practice of the Holy Prophet. Then if they are hateful in the eyes of these two authorities, be happy to be in accord with God and His Prophet. If his actions happen to be pleasing to God and His Prophet and you are inimical to him, then know that surely you are follower of your low desire. You are hating him on account of your low desire, being unjust to him on account of your hatred for him and rebelling against God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and against His Prophet and opposing both these authorities. So turn towards God, repenting for your hatred, and ask from Him love for that man and for others from among the friends of God and His *walis* and His selected ones, and from among the pious men among His servants that you should be in harmony with God in loving him.

You should act in the same way in the case of one whom you love. That is to say, you should examine his actions, in the light of the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. Then if he happens to be dear to these two authorities you should love him. But if they are hateful to him, you should hate him, so that you may not love him through your low desires and hate him. Surely you are commanded to oppose your low desires. God says:

> *And follow not the (low) desire, lest it lead thee astray from the path of Allah.* (38:26).

THE THIRTY-SECOND DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

How often do you say, "Whoever I love, my love for him does not endure. Separation intervenes between us, either through absence, or through death, or through enmity, or through destruction or loss of wealth."

So you are told, "Do you not know, O believer in God, on whom God has conferred gifts, the one to whom God has paid attention, the one whom God guards with jealous care? Do you not know that surely God is jealous. He has created you for Himself and you are desirous of belonging to somebody other than Him? Have you not heard His words: *He loves them, and they love Him* (5:54)? As also His commandment:

> *And I have not created the jinn and the men, except that they should serve Me* (51:56).
>
> Or have you not heard the saying of the Holy Prophet: "When God loves a servant He puts him in a trial; then if he shows patience, He looks after him. "He was asked: "O Prophet of God (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and what is His looking after?"

He said: "He does not leave for him any wealth or any children."

This is because when he has any wealth or children whom he loves, his love for his Lord becomes divided; then it becomes diminished and scattered, then it is distributed between God and others; and Allah does not brook any partner, and He is jealous and He is powerful over all things and predominant over all. So He destroys His partner and annihilates it in order to monopolise the heart of His servant for His ownself to the exclusion of all others. Then will be proved the truth of the words of God: *He will love them and they will love Him* (5:54).

Till at last the heart becomes clear of all partners of God and idols such as wife and wealth and children and enjoyments

and fashions and longing for dominions and kingdoms, for miracles and spiritual states and spiritual stages and stations, and gardens of heaven and spiritual grades and nearness to God — no purpose will remain in the heart and no desire. Then the heart will become like a holed vessel in which no liquid can stay, because it is now broken by the act of God. Whenever any purpose grows in it, the act of God and His jealousy break it. Then screens of dignity and might and awe are hung round it and besides this, trenches of greatness and might are dug.

Thus, no desires about anything will be able to approach the heart. Nothing of wealth and children and wife and friends and miracles and authority and power of interpretation will be able to do any harm to the heart. Surely all these things will remain outside the heart, and therefore they will not excite the jealousy of God. Rather all these things will be a sign of honour from God for His servant and His kindness towards him and His blessings and sustenance and things beneficial to those who go to Him. Thus these people are honoured by this and shown mercy by it and protected through this investment of honour from God Who will be their guard and police and shelter and intercessor in this life and in the hereafter.

THE THIRTY-THIRD DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

There are four kinds of men. One is who has no tongue and no heart and he is a man of ordinary position, dull and lowly, who does not count with God and one who has nothing good in him. He and people like him are like chaff which has no weight, unless God covers them with His mercy and guides their heart towards faith in Himself, and moves the organs of their body in obedience to Himself. Beware that we do not become one of them and do not entertain them nor mind them nor yet stand among them. These are the people who incur the chastisement and wrath and anger of God; they are the inhabitants of fire and

its inmates. We seek refuge in God from them. You should, on the contrary, be equipped with Divine knowledge and be among the teachers of good and guides for religion and its leaders and inviters to it. Therefore, beware that you should come to them and invite them to obedience to God and warn them against sinning against God. Thus you will be a fighter in the cause of God and will be given the rewards of prophets and messengers of God. The Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to Ali:

> "If God gives guidance to one person through your guiding him, it is better for you than that on which the sun rises."

The other kind of person has got a tongue but no heart; he speaks on wisdom but does not act according to it. He calls people to God but himself flees from Him. He abhors defects in others but he himself persists with similar defects in himself. He shows to others his piety but contends with God by committing major sins. And when he is alone he is like a wolf in clothes. Here is a person against whom the Holy Prophet has warned. He said:

> "The thing to be most afraid of, and which I am afraid of in respect of my followers, is the evil learned men."

We seek refuge in God from such learned men. So you should keep away from such a man and run away from him, lest you should be carried away by the sweetness of his talk and then the fire of his sin will burn you and the filth of his inner self and his heart should kill you.

There is a third kind of man who has a heart but no tongue and he is a believer. God has screened him away from His creation and hung round him His curtains, and given him an insight into the blemishes of his own self and enlightened his heart and made him aware of the mischiefs of mixing with people, and of the evil of talking and speaking and who has

become sure that safety is in silence and retirement in a corner, as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever kept silent attained to salvation." And as further he has said: "Surely the service of God consists of ten parts, nine of which are in silence." Thus this man is a friend of God in His secrets, protected, possessing safety and plenty of intelligence, companion of the Beneficent God, blessed with His favours and as for good, everything good is with him. Therefore, you must keep company with such a man and mix with him and render him service and endear yourself to him by fulfilling the needs which he may feel, and provide him with things which will give ease and comfort. If you do these things God will love you and choose you and include you in the company of His friends and pious servants together with His blessings, if it pleases Him.

The fourth kind of man is one who is invited to the world invisible, clothed in dignity, as it is related in the tradition:

> "Whoever learns and acts upon his learning and imparts it to others is invited to the world invisible and made great."

Such a man is possessed of the knowledge of God and His sign and his heart is made the repository of the rare things of His knowledge and He intimates to him such secrets as He has kept hidden from others, and He has selected him and drawn him towards Himself, and guided him and raised him towards Himself, and expanded his heart for the acceptance of these secrets and points of knowledge, and made him a worker in His cause and are inviter of God's servants to the path of virtue, and a warner against the chastisement of evil deeds and an argument of God in their midst, a guide and a rightly-guided man, an intercessor and one whose intercession has been accepted, a truthful man and one who verifies the truth of others, a deputy of God's prophets and messengers, may the blessings of God be on them.

So this man is the end and culminating point of mankind and there is no station above this, except that of prophethood. It is your duty to beware that you do not oppose such a man and be averse to him and avoid accepting him; and be attentive towards what he says and admonishes. So, verily, safety lies in what such a man says and also in his company, and destruction and misguidance be in what is besides him; except such men to whom God gives power and assistance towards truth and mercy.

I have divided mankind for you (into four divisions). Now, you have to look at your ownself if you have an observant mind, and save yourself in the light of it, if you are anxious to save it, having love for it. May God guide you and us towards what He loves and is pleased with, in this world and the hereafter!

THE THIRTY-FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

How strange that you should be angry with your Lord and blame Him and find fault with Him and ascribe to Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, injustice and delay in the matter of allotting sustenance and sufficiency and in the removal of calamities. Do you not know that for every course of events there is an appointed time and for every calamity there is a point of consummation? It can neither be made earlier nor deferred. The times of calamities do not change so as to give place to comfort and the times of difficulties do not change into that of affluence. Adopt the best of manners and stick to silence and patience and cheerful submission and reconcilement with your Lord, and repent for your angry attitude towards God and your accusations of Him in the matter of His action.

In the presence of God there is no room for demanding one's due in full nor for retaliation without incurring a sin, contrary is the response to the urge of nature, such as is to be found in the case of mutual relationship between His servants. He, the Mighty and the Glorious, is absolutely alone from

eternity, existing before everything, and He created the things and created their benefits and harms. So He knows their beginning and their end and their ultimate object and their sequel. He, the Mighty and the Glorious, is wise in the matter of His action and is firm in His fashioning of things and there is no contradiction in His acts. And He does not do anything without any meaning and does not create anything without any purpose or in a playful manner. It is not proper that any defect or blame should be ascribed to His deeds. Rather, you should wait for relief if you feel exhausted in your reconcilement with Him and in exhibiting a spirit of cheerful submission and of merging in His action, till the time of the decree of providence reaches its appointed time, and the trying conditions change into their opposite by the passage of time and the consummation of the course of events, in the same way as the winter attains its consummation and makes room for summer, and the night attains consummation and makes room for the day.

Thus, if you ask for the light of day during the increasing darkness of the evening it will not be given to you; rather the darkness of the night will increase till it reaches its end and the time of dawn approaches; the day comes with its light whether you ask for and desire it, or keep silent over it and dislike it. So if you want the return of the night at that time, your prayer will not be granted because you have asked for an untimely thing. You will be left to lament and be deprived and be made disgusted and ashamed. So leave all this and stick to reconcilement and good faith with your Lord and graceful patience. What is yours will not be snatched away from you and what is not yours will not be given to you. By my faith it is so, provided that you ask from God and seek His help by prayer and entreaty, worshipping Him and obeying Him and carrying out His orders in pursuance of His commandment: *Call on Me and I will accept your prayers* (40:60). and another commandment of His: *Apply to God for His favour* (4:32), and of similar other verses of the Holy Qur'an and sayings of the Holy Prophet.

You will pray to Him and He will accept your prayer in its appointed time and at the end of its appointed term and when He wills; and also if there is any advantage for you in this, in your worldly life and in the world hereafter or if the same accords with His dispensation and with the end of the fixed term.

Do not blame Him when He delays the acceptance of your prayer and do not get exhausted in your prayer, for verily if you do not gain, you do not lose anything either. If He does not accept your prayer immediately in this world's life He will give you a deferred reward in the life to come. There is a tradition handed down from the Holy Prophet which purports to say that on the Day of Resurrection the servant of God will find in His book of deeds some good deeds which he will not recognise; then he will be told that these are in exchange for his prayers in his worldly life that were not destined to be accepted or something to the effect, as is narrated in the Tradition. The least of your spiritual state should be that you should be remembering your Lord, adhering strictly to your faith in His unity while asking anything from Him, and that you should not ask from anybody else and not carry your need to anybody except Him. So, at all times, during the night or day, in health or in illness, in adversity or in prosperity, in difficulty or in ease, you are in either of two conditions:

(1) Either you refrain from asking and remain satisfied and reconciled and surrendered to His act like a dead body before one who gives it the funeral bath, or like a suckling babe in the hand of a nurse, or like a polo-ball before the polo-rider who makes it turn and revolve with his polo stick. Thus does Providence turn as it likes. If it happens to be a blessing, thanks and praise go forth from you, and an increase comes from Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, in the gift, as He has said:

If you are grateful, I will give you more (14: 7).

But if it is an adversity, patience and reconcilement go forth from you with the help of the strength given by Him, and

firmness of heart and help and blessing and mercy from Him. He, the Mighty, the Glorious, says: *Surely God is with the patient* (2:153). That is to say, He is with the patient with His favours such as help and strength, and as He also says:

> *If you help Allah, He will help you and make firm your feet* (47:7).

When you have helped (the cause of) God, by opposing your low desires and by giving up finding fault with Him and refraining from being displeased with His action with regard to yourself and you become an enemy to your ownself for the sake of God, ready to strike it with the sword whenever it moves with its unbelief and polytheism, and you cut off its head with your patience and reconcilement to your Lord, as also with your satisfaction with His act and promise and pleasure with both of them, when you do so, God will be your Helper. And as for blessing and mercy, there is His word:

> *And give good news to the patient, who when a misfortune befalls them say: Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course* (2:157).

(2) The alternative condition is that you supplicate before God with prayer, and humble entreaties, regarding Him as great, and being obedient to His orders. Yes, do call on God, and it is keeping a thing in its proper place, because He, Himself, urges you to ask of Him and not to be angry with Him, in the event of the acceptance of your prayer being deferred to its appointed time. So, take note of the difference between the two conditions and do not go beyond the bounds of both, because there is no other condition besides these. Beware lest you should be among the unjust ones, who transgress the limits. In that case He will destroy you and He will not care, as He destroyed those people who have gone before in this world by intensifying His calamities, and in the next life by a painful chastisement. Glory

be to God, the Great! O Knower of my condition ! on You is my reliance.

THE THIRTY-FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Abstinence from unlawful things is incumbent on you otherwise the rope of destruction is coiled round you. You can never get out of its tangle unless God covers you with His mercy. There is an authentic report of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that the foundation of religion is abstinence from unlawful things and its destruction is in greed, and that whoever goes round a protected pasture-land is only too likely to help himself to it as cattle pasturing freely by the side of a cornfield are only too likely to stretch their mouth towards it. It is unlikely that the cornfield would remain safe from them. Umar Ibn Khattab (may God be pleased with him) is reported to have said:

> "We used to abstain from nine-tenth of lawful things in the fear lest we should fall in the zone of unlawful things."

It is reported of Abu Bakr Siddiq (may God be pleased with him) that he said:

> "We used to avoid seventy doors of permissible things for fear of getting involved in sin."

These exalted personages did so just to be away from any proximity to unlawful things; and in doing so they acted on the saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

> "Beware! verily every king has a protected pasture-land and the pasture-land of God is His forbidden things."

Thus whoever goes round the pasture-land is likely to get into it; but one who enters the fort of the king and passes through the first, then the second and then the third gate till he

approaches the threshold, is better than one who stands at the first door which is contiguous to the open countryside. So if the third door is shut against him it will not harm him as he is still behind two doors of the palace and he has the treasury of the king and his army near him. But as for the man who is at the first gate, if this one is closed upon him, he remains alone in the open land and he may be seized by wolves and enemies and may be among the destroyed ones. Similarly, if one who treads the path of God's appointed duties and makes it incumbent upon himself and the help of power and concession is taken away from him and he is cut off from these, he will still be on leave; and he will not be outside the law. So when death overtakes him he will be found on obedience and service and his good work will be borne testimony to.

If one stands on leave and permission and does not advance towards the obligatory duties, and if the resource is snatched away and he is cut off from His help, low desires and passions of the animal self will overpower him; he will indulge in unlawful things and get out of the law and join the company of devils who are the enemies of God and shall have gone astray from the right path. So if death overtakes him before repentance, he will be among the perished ones unless God covers him with His mercy and favours. So every danger lies in standing on leave and permission and every safety in standing on obligatory duties.

THE THIRTY-SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Make your life after death your capital money and your worldly life, its profit. Spend your time first of all in acquiring your life after death. Then if any surplus time is left spend it in acquiring your worldly life, in seeking your livelihood. Do not make your worldly life your capital money and your life after death your profit, so as to spend any surplus time left in obtaining your life after death and to fulfil the obligations of five prayers in such a away, as if putting all together in a single

melting pot, dropping its different parts and upsetting the order of various obligations without the ritual bending and prostration and without restful pause between different parts; or when you are exhausted and agitated you take to sleep, leaving the whole thing unattended, like a dead body during the night and whiling away the day in obedience to your animal self and your animal desire and your devil and selling your hereafter in exchange for your worldly life, acting like a slave of the animal self and its riding beast. You are commanded to ride on your animal self and to discipline it and to exercise it and to traverse on its back the paths of safety that is the way to the life eternal and to the obedience to its Lord. But you have acted unjustly towards it by accepting its urges and you have handed over to it its reins and followed it in its low desires and in its enjoyments, and you have made an alliance with its devil and its passion, so you have missed the best thing of this life and of the hereafter and have incurred loss in respect of both of them, and thus you enter on the Day of Judgement the poorest of men and the greatest loser in respect of religion, and without obtaining, by following it, most of your allotted portion in this world's life. On the other hand, if you had traversed with it the path of the hereafter and used it as your capital money, you would have gained in your worldly life as well as in the hereafter; and your destined portion of this world's life would have come to you with all its pleasantness and you would have been secure and respected. Thus the Holy Prophet has said:

> "Surely God gives felicity in this world's life on the intention pertaining to the hereafter, whereas the felicity of the hereafter is not given on the intention pertaining to this world's life."

How can it be otherwise? The intention for the hereafter is obedience to God because intention is the very soul of service and its very being. So when you obey God with your abstinence in this world's life and with seeking the abode of the hereafter you become among the chosen ones of God and the people of

obedience to, and love for Him, and the life hereafter is obtained by you and that is paradise and nearness to God. The world will be at your service and the portion allotted to you from it will be given to you in full, because everything is subordinate to its Creator and its Master. But if you get engrossed in the worldly life and turn your face from the hereafter, the Lord will be angry with you; you will lose the hereafter and the world will be disobedient to you, and will put you in trouble and difficulty in the matter of allowing your allotted portion to reach you on account of the anger of God towards you because it is owned by God; so it abases whoever is disobedient to Him. Then it is that the truth of a saying of the Holy Prophet is established. The saying is this:

> "The world and the hereafter are two co-wives; if you please any of the two the other becomes angry with you."
>
> God, the Mighty, the Glorious, says:
> *Of you were some who desired this world, and of you were some who desired the Hereafter* (3:151).

These are called the children of the world and the children of the hereafter, respectively. See, then, of which these two you are children and to which of these two tribes you like to belong while you are in this world. Then when you pass on to the other life there will be one party in the heaven and the other party in the hell. One section of people shall remain standing at their own place in the midst of prolonged reckoning on a day which, as the word of God says, is the equivalent of fifteen thousand years. Then there will be another section of people who shall be staying by the dining table on which will be very good food and fruits and honey whiter than ice, as it has been narrated in the *Hadith*:

> "They shall be looking at their residence in Heaven until, when God will be free from the account of the people, they will enter heaven; they shall find their way towards

their residences just as a man in this world finds his way to his residence."

Evidently, these people attain to this position only by their discarding the world and by their occupying themselves with, and their attempt to get to the hereafter and the Master; and those other people are involved in the accounts and various kinds of difficulties and humiliations only on account of their preoccupations with the world and their attachment to it, and their indifference towards the hereafter and the scantiness of their attention towards its affairs and their forgetfulness of the Day of Judgment and what is to happen to them in the future among the things mentioned in the Book of God and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. So look at your own self with the look of mercy and affection and choose for it the one that is better among the two groups, and keep it away from bad associates and from the disobedient from among men and jinns; and make the Book of God and the *Sunnah* your guide and look at these two authorities with contemplation and meditation and act on them and do not be deceived by mere talk, and by greed. God says:

> *Whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and whatever he forbids you abstain (therefrom); and keep your duty to Allah* (59:7).

Do not oppose him so that you cease acting on what he has brought. Do not make innovation from your own self either with regard to deeds, or with regard to service, as God says in respect of a people who went away from the right path:

> *And as for monkery, they innovated it. — We did not prescribe it to them* (57:27).

Accordingly, He purified His Prophet and kept him away from falsehood. Thus He says:

> *Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed* (53:34).

meaning: Whatever he has brought to you, it is from Me, and not from his desire and self, so follow it.

He further says:
Say if you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you (3:30).

It is clear that the path of love is to follow him in word and deed. Thus the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says: "Earning is my way and reliance on God is my state."

So you are between his practice and his state. If your faith is weak, you should take to earning which is his practice, and if your faith is strong, you should adopt the state which is reliance on God. God the Mighty, the Glorious, says: *they rely on him* (10:84).

He also says:
And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him (65:3).

He further says:
Surely Allah loves those who trust (in Him) (3:158).

So He commands you to have trust in Him and insists on your sticking to it just as His Prophet has been commanded to observe the same. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says:

> "Whoever does a deed on which there is no commandment of ours is rejected."

This covers livelihood and deeds and words. We have no Prophet except him whom we can follow, and no book except the Qur'an on which we can act. Do not, therefore, go beyond these two, lest you should perish and lest your desires and the devil should lead you astray:

> *And follow not (low) desire, lest it lead thee astray from the path of Allah* (38:26).

Safety lies in the Book of God and the practice of the Holy Prophet, and destruction in what is besides them, and with the help of these two the servant of God progresses towards the state of *wilayat*, of *badaliyyat* and of *ghauthiyyat*.

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Why is that I see you, O believer, envying your neighbour for his food and drink and dress and wife, and his house of residence and for his enjoying himself on his affluence, because you find him in possession of blessings of his Master and of the portion allotted to him? Do you not know that it weakens your faith and causes you to fall in the eye of your Master and makes you loathsome to Him? Have you not heard the saying narrated from the Holy Prophet that Allah says: "An envious person is an enemy of Our blessing"?

And have you not heard the saying of the Holy Prophet: "Verily envy eats up virtues as fire eats up fuel"?

Then why are you envious of him, o poor man? Is it for his portion, or for yours? If you envy him for the portion allotted to him by God, you come under the operation of His word:

> *We portion not among them their livelihood in the life of this world* (43:32).

You have most surely been unjust to this man who is enjoying the blessing of his Lord with which He has specially favoured him, and which He has appointed as his portion and has not left any share in it for anyone else. Who will be more unjust than yourself, and the more miserly and more foolish and more stupid? If you envy him on account of your portion, then you have betrayed the utmost ignorance, because your portion will not be given to anybody else and will not be transferred from you to anybody else. God is free from such injustice. He says:

> *My sustenance cannot be changed, nor am I in the least unjust to the servants* (50:29).

Surely God has not been so unjust to you as to take from you what He has allotted to you and to give it to somebody else. Such a thought only betrays your ignorance and is an injustice to your brother. It is better for you that you should be envious of the earth which is a storehouse of treasures and buried wealth, consisting of various kinds of gold, silver and precious stones out of what had been hoarded by past kings; of Ad and Thamud and kings and emperors of Persia and Rome, than that you should envy your brother.

Your likeness is only like that of a man who sees a king with his majesty and army and power and kingdom, exercising control over the lands and collecting their taxes and exploiting them for his own benefit and enjoying life with various kinds of enjoyments and gratification of desires, but he does not envy this king. Instead he sees a wild dog which serves a dog from among the dogs of that king and remains with it, and passes day and night with it and is given the leavings and crumbs of food from the royal kitchen, so he lives on that; this man begins envying this dog, and becomes hostile to him and desires his death and wants meanly to be in its place after its death without being indifferent towards the world or developing a religious attitude towards life and contentment with his own lot. Is there any man in the whole course of time more foolish than this man and more stupid and more ignorant?

Had you known, o poor man! what your neighbour will have to face in the future in the form of a lengthy account on the Day of Resurrection if he has not obeyed God in what He has given him out of His blessings, and in the matter of fulfilling the obligations due to Him, and if he has not obeyed His orders and observed His prohibitions while enjoying His blessings, and has not used them as an aid to His service and obedience to Him — that he will face such things as will make him desire that he was not given even a particle of these enjoyments and had never seen any enjoyment at all. Have you not heard what has come down in the Tradition?

"Surely there will be parties of people who will desire on the Day of Resurrection that their flesh might be severed from their body by means of scissors on their seeing the recompense of the sufferers of troubles."

Your neighbour will desire on the Day of Judgment to be in your place in this world's life, on seeing his own lengthy account and his own difficulties, and his standing fifty thousand years in the heat of the sun of that day on account of what he has enjoyed of the comfort of this world's life, while you will be keeping aside from all this under the shade of the throne of God, eating, drinking, enjoying, happy and joyful and comfortably placed on account of your patience in the face of the difficulties of this world's life and lack of means, and its troubles and its poverty and its neediness, and on account of your contentment with your lot and your reconcilement to your Lord in what He has decreed and ordered in the matter of your poverty, and of the affluence of others and of your ill-health and others' health, and of your difficulties and others' ease and comfort and of your abasement and others' honour. May God make you and us among those who show patience in the face of calamities and feel grateful for His blessings and who resign and entrust their affairs to the Lord of the earth and the heaven.

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Whoever executes the work of his Lord with sincerity and earnestness, dreads whatever is besides Him day and night. O people, do not claim what you do not possess. Proclaim the unity of God, and do not associate anything with Him and make yourself the target of the arrows of providence which will strike you not to kill, but to injure, and whoever perishes for the sake of God receives his compensation from Him.

THE THIRTY-NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

To take anything on the basis of desire without any order from God is swerving from duty and opposition to truth; and to take anything without being prompted by desire is harmony and agreement with truth, and to discard it is insincerity and hypocrisy.

THE FORTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Do not expect to be included in the company of spiritual people unless you have become an enemy of your whole self and have become absolutely separated from all the organs of your body and all your limbs and have cut off all connections with your existence, with your movements and restful conditions, with your hearing and seeing, with your speaking and holding, with your effort and action and your intelligence and with everything that proceeds from you before your spiritual existence comes into being in you. All that will be found in you after the spiritual existence is breathed into you because all these things constitute a screen between you and your Lord. So then you become a soul pure and simple, secret of secrets and unseen of the unseen, positively distinct from all things in secret and recognising everything as an enemy and a screen and darkness, just as Abraham the friend of God (peace be on him) says:

> *Surely they are an enemy to me, but not (so) the Lord of the worlds (Who is the only friend)* (26: 77).

He said this in respect of the idols, so you should consider your whole being and your parts, as idols together with the rest of the creation and should not obey anything out of them and should not follow them at all. Then you will be endowed with secret and Divine knowledge and rare things in it, and will be gifted with the power of creation and miracle-working which

is of the type of power to be found in the possession of believers in heaven.

You will be in this condition as if you are resurrected after death in the hereafter. You will be wholly a manifestation of the power of God; and will speak through God, and hold through God, and walk through God, and understand through God, and will have your comfort and rest through God. Thus you will be blind to everything besides Him; you will be deaf to everything besides Him; you will not find anything existing besides Him so long as you observe the limits of law and conform to the injunctions and prohibitions. Then if anything is amiss in you from the requirements of law you should know that you are being tried and tempted and played with by the devil. So return to the commandment of the Law and stick to it and keep yourself clear of the low desires, because every fact which is not confirmed by the Law is unbelief.

THE FORTY-FIRST DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

We shall set forth for you a parable on affluence and we will say, "Do you not see the king taking an ordinary man and making him a governor and putting him in charge of a certain town, and giving him the robe of honour and flags and banners and drums and army; and the man passes some time in this condition till when he feels secure in it and begins to believe in its permanence and to take pride in it; and forgets his previous condition and handicaps and humiliation and poverty and obscurity thereof, and he is seized with pride and vanity, there comes from the king the order of his dismissal and the king demands an explanation for the crimes he has committed and for his transgressing his injunctions and prohibitions. So the king imprisons him in a narrow and dark prison and prolongs his imprisonment, and the man continues to remain in this suffering and humiliation and poverty in consequence of which his pride and vanity melt and his self is broken and the fire of his desires

is extinguished and all this happens before the eyes of the king and within his knowledge; after which he becomes favourably inclined towards the man and looks at him with compassion and mercy and orders his release from the prison together with acts of kindness towards him and the robe of honour and the restoration of the governorship and that of another city like this. And he gives all these things to the man as a free gift. So he continues in this state of governorship which remains steady and pure and sufficient and blessed."

This is the case of a believer when God draws him near and chooses him. He opens before the eye of his heart door of His mercy, blessing and reward. Then a believer sees with his inner heart which no eye has seen and no ear has heard and which has not occurred to any human heart in respect of the study of the unseen things of the kingdom of heavens and earth and of nearness to God; and of the sweet and nice words and happy promise and lavish affection, and of the acceptance of prayer and truthfulness, and of the fulfilment of promise and the words of great wisdom thrown on his heart which express themselves through his tongue; and along with these He completes on this man His favours externally over his body and his organs in the shape of food and drink and dress and lawful wife and other permissible things and the paying of regard to the bounds of law and to the formal acts of devotion. So God maintains this condition for His believing servant who is drawn towards Him for a considerable time until when the servant feels secure in it, and becomes deceived by it and believes in its permanence, God opens for him doors of calamity and various kinds of difficulties in respect of life and property and wife and children, and removes from him all that He had bestowed upon him before this, so that he is left astonished and helpless and broken down and cut off from his people.

If he looks at his external circumstances he sees things which appear evil to him; he sees what grieves him. And if he asks God to remove his trouble, his petition does not meet with

any acceptance, and if he asks for any good promise he does not get it quickly and if he promises anything he is not informed about its fulfilment and if he sees any dream he does not succeed in interpreting it and getting at its truth; and if he intends to get back towards people he does not get any means to it; and if any alternative appears to him and he acts on it he is immediately overtaken by chastisement and the hands of people get hold of his body and their tongues assail his honour; and if he wants to free himself from the obligation of the condition in which he finds himself and to go back to the condition previous to his acceptance, such a prayer is not accepted; and if he asks for cheerful submission and delight and happy living in the midst of the calamities with which he is surrounded, even this is not granted.

Then it is that his self begins to melt and the low desires begin to disappear and his intentions and longings begin to pass away and the existence of everything is reduced to naught. This state of affairs is prolonged for him and even made to increase in intensity and severity and stress, until, when the servant passes away altogether from human characteristics and attributes and remains merely a soul, he hears an inner voice calling out to him:

> *Urge with thy foot; here is a cool washing-place and a drink* (38:42).

as it was said to Prophet Job (peace be upon him). Then God makes for him oceans of His mercy and compassion and tenderness and His happiness and sweet smell of knowledge of reality and subtle points of His knowledge, and opens for him doors of His favours and lavish care and extends the hands of people towards him for gifts and service in all conditions of life, and releases the tongues of people for his praise and applause and good renown in every affair, and urges the feet of people to come to him and causes the necks of people to bow before him and makes kings and chiefs subservient to him and completes on him His favours, internal and external, and takes charge of his

external upbringing, through His creation and other blessings, and perfects his inner upbringing by His kindness and favour, and makes this state continue for him till he meets Him. Then He makes him enter in what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what has not occurred to the heart of any man, as God says:

> *No soul knows what refreshment of the eyes is hidden for them; a reward for what they did* (32:17).

THE FORTY-SECOND DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The spirit of man can be in two conditions and there is no third one: the state of happiness and the state of trouble. When it is in trouble, there is anxiety and complaint and displeasure and criticism and finding fault with God, the Mighty, the Exalted, lacking in patience and cheerful submission and reconcilement; on the contrary, there is the displaying of bad manners, the sin of associating the creation and worldly means with the Creator, and finally unbelief. When it is in comfort, it is a victim of greed and insolence and predominance of low desires and enjoyments. Whenever it gratifies a desire it wants another and belittles what it already possesses of blessing; then it finds fault and defect in these blessings and asks for one better than these and brighter as well, out of what is not in its lot, and turns away from what is allotted to it and thus involves the man in a long series of troubles; and it does not feel contented with what is in its hands and what is allotted to it and lands into distress and in places of destruction in the midst of a long series of trouble which has no end either in this world or in the hereafter, as it has been said:

> "Verily the most distressing of punishment is seeking what is not allotted."

Thus when he is in trouble it does not desire anything except its removal, and forgets all pleasures and desires and delightful things and does not ask anything of these. Then when

he is blessed with an easy and comfortable life, he returns to arrogance and greed and disobedience and recalcitrant turning away from obedience to his Lord and plunges in his sinful occupation. He forgets the misfortune in which he had lately been and the calamity to which he had been a victim.

So he is hurried back to a state worse than that in which he was with various kinds of calamities and troubles as a punishment for what he had perpetrated and committed and for major sins, in order to keep him away from these and restrain him from sinful acts in future, after it was found that ease and comfort would not reform him but that his safety lay in calamities and difficulties.

If he had observed good manners when the calamity was removed from him and had held fast to obedience and thankfulness and cheerful acceptance of his lot, it would have been better for him in this world and the hereafter. Then he would have obtained an increase in the comforts of life and the pleasure of God and a happy life and resourcefulness and pleasure.

So whoever desires safety in this world's life and in the hereafter he should cultivate patience and cheerful submission and avoid complaining against people and obtain all his necessïties from his Lord, the Mighty, the Glorious, and make it an obligation to obey Him, and should wait for ease and be exclusively devoted to Him, the Mighty, the Glorious. He, in any case, is better than those besides Him in the whole of His creation.

More often than not, the deprivation caused by Him is a gift, His punishment a blessing, His calamity a remedy, His promise a cash, His credit is an existing state, His word is a deed. Undoubtedly, His word and His commandment, when He intends to do anything, is only saying to it "Be," and it comes into being. So all His actions are good and based on wisdom and expedience, except that He keeps the knowledge of His

expedience hidden from His servants and He is alone in this. So it is better and proper for the servants to be in a state of cheerful submission and resignation and to be engaged in service to Him by carrying out His orders and observing His prohibitions and being resigned to His allottment and by discarding such occupations as pertain to the nourishment of the creation – because this privilege is the source of all allottments and the point of their coming into force and their basis; and to be silent on why, how, and when (of happenings) and to refrain from ascribing a fault to God in all His actions and inactions. This statement derives its validity from a *hadith* narrated by Abdullah Ibn Abbas who is quoted by Ata Ibn Abbas. Ibn Abbas is reported to have said:

> "I was riding behind the Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he said to me, My boy, guard the obligations to God, God will look after you; guard the obligations to God, you will find Him in front of you."

So when you ask from God, and when you seek assistance, seek it from Him. The pen is dried after writing down all that is to happen and if the servants of God strive to benefit you with anything which God has not decreed for you, they will not be able to do it and if all the servants of God strive to harm you with anything which God has not decreed for you, they will not be able to do so. So if you can act on the commandments of God with sincerity of faith, do it; and if you are unable to do so then surely it is better to be patient on what you dislike but there is much good in that. Know that the help of God comes through patience, and comfortable circumstances, with distress, and that difficulty is accompanied by ease. So it behoves every believer that he should make this *hadith* a mirror for his heart and its internal and external garment and its motto, and should act on it in all his actions and moments of pause so that he may remain safe in this world and the hereafter and may receive honour in both of them by the mercy of God, the Exalted.

THE FORTY-THIRD DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Whoever asks anything from men does so only through his ignorance of God and weakness of faith and knowledge of reality, and lack of certainty and lack of patience; and whoever refrains from asking does so only through the abundance of his knowledge of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and through the strength of his faith and of certainty, and through an incessant increase in his knowledge of God every moment, and his shyness from Him, the Mighty, the Glorious.

THE FORTY-FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Surely every prayer of the man of spiritual knowledge, to God, the Mighty, the Glorious, is not granted, and every promise made to him is not redeemed so that he may not meet with destruction through over-optimism. Because there is no spiritual knowledge except that he enjoys the nearness of God and his state and station is that he does not wish for anything but God and does not incline to and feel satisfied with anything which is besides Him and is not delighted with any thing that is besides Him. Thus the asking (on the part) of (the devotee) for the acceptance of his prayer and the fulfilment of the promise made to him, is opposed to his path and not in accordance with his state.

There are two reasons for this. One is that he may not be overcome by hope and delusion through the subtle planning of God and become unmindful of the requisite amount of good behaviour in his approach to God and thus meet his destruction. The second is that it may amount to associating something with his Lord, the Mighty, the Glorious, which is besides Him, because there is no one in the world absolutely free from sin, except the prophets. It is for this reason that He does not always grant the prayers and fulfil the promises made to the devotee, lest he should ask anything urged by his own nature without any

reference to any obedience to the commandments of God in which lies the chance of polytheism; and there are numerous chances of polytheism (*shirk*) in every state, step and station of a spiritual pilgrim. But when the prayer is in accordance with a commandment, it is a thing which increases a man in his nearness to God like prayer and fasting and other things among the obligatory and supererogatory duties of religion, because in this there is obedience to commandment.

THE FORTY-FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Know that people are of two kinds. One kind is like he who is blessed with the good things of the world, whereas the other kind is like he who is tried with what his Lord has decreed for him. As for he who receives the good things, he is not free from the blemishes of sin and darkness in the enjoyment of what he is given. Such a person indulges in luxury on account of these things, when all of a sudden the decree of God comes and darkens his surrounding through various kinds of misfortunes and calamities in the shape of diseases and sufferings and troubles on his own life and property and on the members of his family and on his offspring so that life becomes miserable through them, and it appears as if he had never enjoyed anything. He forgets the comforts and their sweetness. If the affluence continues together with wealth and position and male slaves and female slaves and security from enemies, he is in a state of blessing as if calamity has no existence for him. If he is in the midst of calamity, it seems as if happiness has no existence. All this is due to ignorance of his Master.

Thus if he had known that his Master is absolutely free to do whatever He likes, and changes and transforms and sweetens and embitters and enriches and impoverishes and raises and lowers and gives honour and abases and gives life and causes death and gives a man precedence and pushes him to the background — if he had known all this, he could not have felt

secure in the midst of happy worldly circumstances and could not have felt proud on account of them, nor would he have despaired of happiness while in a state of calamity.

This wrong behaviour of his is due also to his ignorance of this world, which is in reality the place of trials and bitterness and ignorance and pain and darkness, and of which the rule is trial, and happiness only an exception. Thus the worldly life is like a tree of aloes of which the first taste is bitter whereas the ultimate consequence is sweet like honey and no man can get at its sweetness unless he has first swallowed its bitter taste, and no one can reach the honey unless he has first showed patience with its bitterness. So whoever has shown patience in the trials of the world is entitled to taste its blessings.

To be sure, a labourer is given his wages after his forehead has sweated and his body has become tired and his soul has become troubled and his breast has become contracted and his strength has departed and his self has become humiliated and his vanity has become broken through the service of a creature like himself. Thus, when one has drunk all this bitterness in full then follows for him good food and fruits and dress and comforts and joy even if they are small. The world, therefore, is a thing of which the first part is bitterness like the top part of some honey kept in a vessel mixed with bitterness, so that an eater cannot get to the bottom of the vessel and eat the pure honey out of it until after he has tasted the top part of it.

So, when the servant of God has persevered in the performance of the commandment of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and in keeping away from His prohibitions and in submitting before Him and in surrendering himself to the decrees of destiny, and when he has drunk the bitterness thereof and has lifted the burden of it and has struggled against his own low desires and has discarded his own objectives, God gives to him, as a result of this, good life and loving attention and comfort and honour, and He becomes his guardian and feeds him just as a

suckling baby is fed without any effort on his part, and without his bearing any trouble and strain in this world and in the hereafter, in the same manner as an eater of the bitter top part of the previously mentioned honey relishes the bottom part of the contents of the vessel.

So it is proper for the servant who has been favoured by God not to feel secure from the trial of God by being enchanted by the favour, nor to feel sure as to its perpetuity and thus become forgetful of gratitude for it and relax its restrictions by discarding thankfulness on account of it. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "Happy worldly circumstances is a savage thing: so restrain it by thankfulness."

Thus, thankfulness of the blessing of wealth is to acknowledge it to the Giver of it Who is bountiful, that is God, to mention it to one's ownself in all conditions of life, and to appropriate His favour and generosity and also that one should not feel like having any claim on God nor should one outstrip His bounds in this matter nor should one discard His commandment in the matter; and after this by fulfilling the obligation to Him in respect of *Zakat* and expiation and votive offerings and alms and by redressing the sufferings of the oppressed ones and helping the needy who are in difficulty and whose circumstances have changed from good to bad, that is to say, whose times of happiness and hopefulness have changed into hard and difficult ones. Thankfulness for the blessing of comfort in the limbs and the organs of the body is to use them in carrying out the commandments of God and in restraining oneself from things forbidden and from evil and sinful acts.

This is how to protect blessings from passing away and to irrigate its plant and to accelerate the growth of its branches and leaves; and to help the beautification of its fruit and to sweeten its taste and to assure the safety of its end and to make its eating tasteful and to make its swallowing easy and to make it

yield comfort and to enable it to maintain its growth in the body and to make its blessing manifest itself on the organs of the body through various kinds of acts of obedience to God such as will render one nearer to God and keep him in His remembrance, and will further make the servant enter in the life hereafter and the mercy of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and will earn for him an abiding life in the gardens of paradise in the holy companionship of prophets, *siddiqs* (the truthful ones) and *shahids* (witnesses) and the *salihs* (the righteous) — a beautiful company are these.

But if one does not act like this and becomes enamoured by what appears of the outward beauty of such a life and becomes engrossed in the enjoyments of it and becomes contented with the glitter of its mirage and the sparkle of its lightning-like appearance, all of which are like the blowing of cool breeze in the morning of a hot summer day and like the softness of the skin of a serpent and scorpion; and becomes forgetful of the deadly poison which has been reposed in it and of its deep deception and craftiness — all of which have as their aim to catch him and imprison him and to destroy him — such a man should be given the tidings of rejection and of speedy destruction and poverty with abasement and humiliation in this world and of chastisement in the long run in burning hell-fire.

As for the trial of man — sometimes it comes as a punishment for any violation of law and any sin which has been committed; at others, it comes with the object of removing the defects and refining the nature of man, and at still others it comes to raise a man in spiritual rank and to take him to high stages where he may join the people of spiritual knowledge who have experience of different states and positions, for whom the grace of the Lord of the creation and humanity has been allotted beforehand, who have been made to travel in the fields of calamities riding on the conveyance of tenderness and kindness and whom He has soothed by the breeze of kind observation and loving watch in their movements and repose, because such a trial was not meant for destruction and for hurling them in the depths

of hell; on the contrary, by means of these trials God has tested them for selection and choice and has brought out from them the reality of faith and has refined it and made it distinct from polytheism and boastings of self and hypocrisy and has made a free gift, as a reward for them, of various kinds of knowledge, and secret and light.

So when these people have become cleansed outwardly and inwardly and when their hearts have become purified, He places them among the specially selected and the favourites of His court and companions of His mercy in this world and in the hereafter — in this world through their hearts, and in the hereafter through their bodies. Thus their calamities are in fact purifiers of the dirt of polytheism and breeders of connections with people and with the means of the world and with desires and wishes, and are instrumental in melting the boastfulness and greediness and the expectation of returns for obedience to commandments in the shape of high positions and stations in paradise and gardens of heaven.

Now, the indication of trial by way of punishment is want of patience on the arrival of these trials and bewailing and complaints before people. On the other hand the indication of trial by way of purification and removal of weaknesses is the presence of graceful patience without any complaint and expression of grief before friends and neighbours and without any disgust with the performance of commandments and acts of obedience. And the indication of trial for the exaltation of rank is the presence of pleasure and amity and composure of mind and peacefulness with regard to the act of God, the Lord of the earth and heavens, and to completely lose oneself in this trial till the time of its removal in the course of time.

THE FORTY-SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who reports it from his Lord that:

> "Whoever engages himself in My remembrance and has no time to ask anything of Me, I give him better than what is given to those who ask for things."

This is so because when God wishes to choose and select a believer for His Own purpose, He makes him pass through various spiritual conditions and tries him with various kinds of struggles and calamities. He makes him poor after affluence and compels him almost to the point of begging from people for his livelihood at times when all the various ways are closed for him; then He saves him from begging for a livelihood but compels him almost to the point of borrowing from people. Then He saves him from borrowing as well, but compels him to work for his livelihood and makes it easy for him. Then he lives by his earning which is after the example of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah upon him).

But then He makes earning hard for him and commands him by revelation to beg from people and this is a secret commandment which is known and recognised by the person concerned. He makes this begging an act of devotion for him and makes it sinful to discard it, and this in order that his vanity may disappear thereby and his ego be smashed, and this is a state of spiritual exercise. His begging is under Divine compulsion and not by way of polytheism. Then He saves him from this and commands him to take to borrowing from people by an absolute commandment from which it is not possible to escape as was the case with the previous kind of begging.

He then changes him from this condition and severs him from people and makes his livelihood dependent on his asking it

from Him. So he asks from everything that he needs from God and He gives it to him and does not give anything if he keeps silent and refrains from praying for it.

Then He changes him from the state of asking by tongue to that of asking by heart, so he asks from Him everything that he needs by heart, and He gives him everything that he needs, so much so that if he asks by his tongue, He does not give it to him or if he begs from people they either do not give anything to him.

Then He makes him disappear completely both from himself as well as from begging either in open or in secret. He then rewards him with everything that puts right and reforms man, – from among things that are eaten and drunk and worn and constitute other requirements of human life without his making an effort for it or without even the thought of it crossing his mind. Then He befriends him and this is in accordance with the saying:

> *Surely my friend and guardian is God Who has revealed the Book and He befriends the righteous people* (7:196).

Now the word received from God by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) becomes demonstrated in fact, that is, "Who has no time for asking anything I give him more than what I have given to those who have asked," and this is the state of merging in God and a state which belongs to the ordinary saints as well as the *abdal*. At this stage he is given the power of creation and all that he needs comes into existence by the permission of God and to this effect there is a word of His in a Book of His:

> "O son of Adam! I am God, there is no god except Me; I say to a thing "Be" and it comes into existence. Obey Me, so that if you say to a thing "Be" it likewise will come into being."

THE FORTY-SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

I had a dream in which an old man asked me: "What makes a servant of God near to God"?

I said: "This process has a beginning and an end; so the beginning of it is piety and Godliness and its end is to be pleased with God and to surrender oneself to His way and to rely on Him entirely."

THE FORTY-EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

It beseems a believer that he should first attend to the obligatory duties, and when he has accomplished them he should attend to the *Sunnah* or the practice of the Holy Prophet. It is only when he has finished with these that he should take to the optional and extra duties. When a man has not performed his obligatory duties, if he attends to the *Sunnah* it will be foolishness and stupidity, and if he attends to the *Sunnah* and *nafal* or supererogatory duties before he has performed his obligatory duties it will not be accepted of him and he will be abased. His example is like the example of a man who is asked by the king to serve him but he does not come to him (the king) but stays to serve the chief who is the slave of the king, and his servant, and is under his power and sovereignty. It is reported by Hazrat Ali, son of Abu Talib (God be pleased with him), that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

> "The instance of a man who says supererogatory prayers while he is in arrears with regard to his obligatory prayers is like the instance of a pregnant woman who carries, but when she approaches the time of delivery she aborts. Thus she no longer remains pregnant nor does she become a mother."

Similar is the case of the praying man from whom God does not accept supererogatory prayers so long as he has not

performed his obligatory prayers. Also, the instance of a man who prays is like that of a business man who cannot have any profit unless he has first laid his hand on the capital. Similarly, if a man says supererogatory prayers, these will not be accepted of him unless he has first attended to his obligatory prayers. The same is the case of one who discards the *Sunnah* and takes to supererogatory prayers such as have not been included in the obligatory duties, nor have they been clearly stated and emphasised by any order. So among the obligatory duties is the discarding of unlawful things, of associating anything with God, of taking exception to His dispensation and decrees, of responding to the voice of people and following their wishes, and of turning away from the commandment of God and from obedience to Him. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said: "No obedience is due to any man where sinning against God is involved."

THE FORTY-NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Whoever prefers sleep instead of spending the night in wakeful prayer, which is the cause of alertness, chooses an inferior thing and the one which attaches him to the dead and makes him indifferent towards all occupations, because sleep is the brother of death. It is therefore for that reason that sleep is unbecoming of God because He is free from all defects. In the same way sleep cannot be predicated of the angels because they remain very near to God, the Mighty, the Glorious. Similarly, sleep cannot be associated with the people of heaven because they are in very exalted and holy, decent and honourable positions, and because that will cause a defect in their condition of life. Thus all good lies in keeping awake and all evil lies in sleep and indifference towards work.

So, whoever eats out of greed, eats too much, drinks too much and also sleeps too much, much that is good disappears

from him. And whoever eats even a little from unlawful things is like one who has eaten a lot from permissible things out of greed because an unlawful thing beclouds the faith and darkens it, and when faith is darkened there is no prayer and no worship and no sincerity. Whoever eats a lot from lawful things under the commandment of God becomes like one who has eaten a little in the joy of worship and strength. A lawful thing is a light added unto light whereas an unlawful thing is darkness added unto darkness in which there is nothing good; so the eating of a lawful thing out of greed and without any reference to commandment is like the eating of an unlawful thing in a way, and it brings sleep in which there is no good.

THE FIFTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The state of your affairs can be either one or the other of the following:

(1) Either you are not enjoying nearness to God, the Mighty, the Glorious, or

(2) You are close to Him.

Now if you are away from Him, how is it that you are sitting idle and are remiss in obtaining your large share and blessings and abiding honour and plentifulness and security and self-sufficiency and lavish care in this world and in the hereafter? So get up and hasten in your flight towards Him with your two wings. One of these wings is the renunciation of enjoyments and of unlawful desires for them and also of permissible things and all comforts; the other is the bearing of pain and unpleasant things and embarking on difficult adventures and getting away from people and desires and wishes in this world and in the hereafter so as to be successful in union with God and nearness to Him. Then will you get all that a man may desire and obtain? You will then have great exaltation and honour. If you are among those who have been honoured with

His kindness and whom His love has absorbed and who have received His mercy and compassion, then show the best of manners and do not be puffed up with the thought of the state you are in lest you should become negligent of your service and should lean towards the original arrogance, ignorance and oppression and hastiness. There is a word of God in this connection:

> *And man has turned unfaithful to it. Surely he is unjust, ignorant* (33:72).
>
> Again: *And man is ever hasty* (17:11).

Protect your heart from being inclined towards what you have renounced of people and desires and wishes and option and effort and from losing patience and harmony and pleasure with God at the time of the befalling of calamity, but throw yourself before Him in the manner of a ball before a polo-rider who makes it revolve by his stick, and like a dead body in front of a man who gives it the funeral bath, and like a suckling babe in the lap of his mother or nurse. Be blind to what is besides Him so that you do not see anything but Him — nothing that exists, neither any harm, nor any benefit, nor any gift, nor any withholding of a gift. Consider people and worldly means at the time of suffering and calamity as lashes from Him, the Mighty, the Glorious, with which He strikes you, and consider them at the time of comfort and ease and gift as His hand that is feeding you.

THE FIFTY-FIRST DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The man of piety receives his reward twice by way of his portion. First on account of his renouncing the world so that he does not take to it on account of his desire nor in compliance with the urges of his own self, but it is just to fulfil the commandment of God that he has anything to do with it. So when his enmity with his own self and opposition to his desires

are established and he is counted among the verifiers of truth and friends of God and he is admitted in the company of the *abdal* and *'arifin* (knowers of truth), it is then that he is commanded to take to the world and establish contact with it, because now there is a portion for him in it which cannot be discarded and which has not been created for any other person, and after the recording of which the pen of destiny has become dried and about which the knowledge of God has gone beforehand. Then when the commandment has been fulfilled, he takes his share of the world or, receiving information about the knowledge of God, he establishes contact with the world to act as the vehicle of the destiny appointed by him and of His action in the matter, without his being involved in it, and without any desire or purpose and effort on his part — he is rewarded on account of these for the second time, because he does all these things in obedience to the commandment, or to be in accord with the act of God in the matter.

Then if it be said — how did you make the statement about reward in connection with one who was or has been in a very high spiritual position and who, according to your own description, has been admitted in the category of the *abdal* and *'arifin*, and who has been among those accepted by God, having vanished from people and their own selves and from desires and purpose and enjoyments and wishes and expectations of rewards on account of their deeds — people who see in all their acts of obedience and worship nothing but acts of God and His mercy and His blessing and His backing and provisions of ease from Him, and who believe that they are nothing but humble servants of God and that a servant has no right as against his master, since his person and his movements and his responses and his efforts are all possessions of his master: how then can it be said in relation to such a person that he is rewarded, since that he does not ask for any reward or anything else in exchange for his action and does not see any action as proceeding from him but considers himself among the worthless people and among the

poorest of the poor in respect of deeds? If this is said, the reply would be: "You have spoken the truth, except that God bestows His grace on him and nourishes him with fond care and with His blessings and brings him up with His kindness and tenders care and mercy and favour, when he has restrained his hand from the affairs of his own self and from asking for its enjoyments which are reserved for the after-life, and from deriving benefit out of it and from warding off any harm arising out of it, so much so that he becomes like a suckling babe which has no movement in the affairs of his self, and who is nurtured with fond care with the grace of God and sustenance provided by Him at the hands of his parents, who are his guardians and sureties.

When He has taken away from him all interest in his own affairs He makes the hearts of people incline towards him and infuses His mercy and compassion in the hearts so much so that everyone becomes kind to him and becomes inclined to him and does him a good turn. And in this way everything besides God becomes such as does not move but with His commandment and, in response to His act and the grace of God, attends him in this world and in the hereafter, nurturing him in both and keeping away from him all suffering. So it is that the Holy Prophet says (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

> *Surely my friend is Allah, Who revealed the Book, and He befriends the righteous* (7:196)

THE FIFTY-SECOND DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Certainly God tries a party from the believers who are His friends and who hold friendly relations with Him and spiritual knowledge in their possession, in order that they may be turned through the trial towards prayer to Him and He loves to receive prayers from them. Then when they pray, He loves to accept their prayer so that He may give generosity and munificence their rightful shares because these two ask God, the Mighty and Glorious, at the time of the prayer of the believer, for

acceptance; and sometimes the acceptance is granted, but not the immediate fulfilment of prayer, on account of the deferment of decree and not on account of non-acceptance or deprivation. So the servant of God should show good manners at the time of the befalling of a calamity and investigate his own sins of neglecting commandments, or being guilty of doing forbidden things, both open and secret, or finding fault with the decree of Providence, for more often than not he becomes involved in such a trial as a punishment for such sins. So if the calamity is removed, well and good, or else he should continue to pray and show humility and make apology and also persist in his petition to God, for it is possible that the trial is meant to make him persist in his prayer and petition; and he should not blame God for thus delaying the fulfilment of prayer in the manner we have already discussed.

THE FIFTY-THIRD DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Ask from God pleasure with His decree, or the ability to be merged in the action of the Lord because in this lies great comfort and unique high heaven in this world and it is also a big gate of God and a means to the love of God for the believing slave. So whomever God loves, He does not chastise him in this world nor in the hereafter. In these two virtues lie contact with God, union with Him and an intimate connection with Him. Do not be engrossed in your efforts for the pleasures of this life and for such shares as are either not allotted to you or are so allotted. So if they are not allotted, it is foolishness and stupidity and ignorance to make efforts in obtaining them and it is also the greatest of all punishments as it has been said:

> "Among the greatest of punishment is to strive for what is not allotted by Providence."

If it is allotted, it is nothing but greed and divided loyalty in the matter of servitude and love and truth to be engrossed in its pursuit, because engrossment in anything which is not God, the Mighty, the Glorious, is polytheism. One who strives for

worldly pleasures is not sincere in his love for and friendship with God, so whoever adopts with God anything other than Him, is a liar.

Similarly, one who looks forward to any return for his action is insincere. Sincere is he who serves God just to give *rabubiyya*, that is, the attribute of God that controls and nourishes the universe, its due. Such a person serves Him on account of His mastership and deservingness in as much as God, the Mighty, the Glorious, is His owner and it is incumbent on him to perform virtuous deeds and be obedient to Him, since that he wholly belongs to Him together with his movements and restful states and all his various efforts and struggles. The servant and all that he possesses belong to his Master. How can it be otherwise? For, as we have already stated elsewhere, all acts of servitude are a blessing of God and His favour on His servant because it is He Who gives him the power for their performance and has given him power over them.

So, to be busy with the expression of gratitude to Him is better and preferable to asking for returns and rewards from Him on account of such actions.

Then how can you get engrossed in striving for the pleasure of the world when you have seen how a large number of people, whenever pleasures of worldly life multiply in their possession, and the enjoyments and the worldly comforts that are allotted to them come in incessantly and without any break, how their resentment towards their Lord and their disgust and ingratitude in respect of the blessings increase, and their grief and anxiety and neediness for things not allotted to them and consequently not in their possession, multiply? Their own share of worldly things which is with them appears paltry and small and loathsome, and the worldly things which belong to others appear great and beautiful to their hearts and eyes and they begin to make efforts to obtain them in spite of the fact that they are not allotted to their share. In this way their life passes away and

their powers become exhausted, and they become old and their wealth disappears and their bodies become tired, and their foreheads sweat and the records of their life become darkened by excess of their sins and by their commission of big offences in pursuing things which are allotted to others and by their negligence to the commandments of their Lord. So they do not succeed in getting these things and make an exit from this worldly life as poor men, neither being one way nor the other, losers in this life and in the hereafter, not thanking their Lord for what He has allotted to them of their share and therefore not seeking His assistance on account of them in acts of obedience to Him. They do not obtain what they strive for from the share of others but only waste their worldly life as well as the one in the hereafter; so they are the worst of people and most ignorant and vilest in intelligence and insight.

Had they become pleased with the decree of Providence and remained contented with His gift and been obedient to Him in the best manner, their own share of this worldly life would have come to them without any effort and anxiety; then they would have been admitted in the neighbourhood of God, the Exalted, and would have received from Him all that they desired and wished for. May God make you and us among those who have become pleased with His decree, and who have made this their prayer, as also that they may merge in His will and acquire safety of their spiritual health and strength to do what He likes and is pleased with.

THE FIFTY-FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Whoever desires the life hereafter it is incumbent on him to be indifferent towards the world, and whoever desires God it is incumbent on him that he should be indifferent towards the life hereafter. Thus he should discard his worldly life for the sake of his Lord. So as long as any desire from among the desires of this world continues to exist in his heart, and any relish from

among the relishes of it, and any effort for comfort from among the comforts of it in regard to various things of food and drink and dress and marriage and residence and conveyance and rulership and chieftainship, and advancement in his knowledge of various branches of learning and of jurisprudence in preference to the five times of worship and to the narration of *Hadith* (i.e. reported sayings and acts of the Holy Prophet) and the recitation of the Qur'an with its varied readings and syntax and lexicography and rhetoric, as also the desire for the disappearance of poverty and the appearance of affluence, and the departure of calamity and the coming of comfort, and in everything the removal of difficulty and the coming of benefit – if such desires linger in the mind of a person he is certainly not a pious man, because in every one of these things there is relish and pleasure for the self of man and harmony with the desire of the flesh and comfort of the mind and love for it, and these things constitute worldly life in which one loves to remain for ever and with which one tries to get composure of mind and satisfaction.

It beseems one to strive for the expulsion of all these things from the heart and to prepare oneself to remove all these and to root them out of the mind, and to cultivate pleasure in annihilation and abiding poverty and neediness so that there does not remain in his heart even as much as the pleasure of the sucking of the stone of a date, so that his abstemiousness in worldly life may become pure.

So when he has perfected it, all grief and sorrow from his heart and all anxiety from his mind will disappear, and there will come to him comforts and goodly life and intimacy with God, as has been said by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

> "Indifference towards the world brings happiness to the heart and body."

But so long as there remains in his heart any attraction for this world, sorrows and griefs and fear and apprehension will have a standing abode in his heart and abasement will be a necessary concomitant for him as also the state of being veiled from God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and from His nearness, by a veil thick in several folds. All these will not be removed except through the complete disappearance of the love of this world and by the cutting asunder of all connection with it.

Next, he should be indifferent towards the life hereafter so as not to wish for ranks and high grades, and beautiful maidens and handsome boys, and houses and mansions and conveyance, and suits of clothes and ornaments and articles of food and drink and other things of this kind from among what God, the Great, has kept prepared for His believing servants.

So he should not try to get any recompense and reward for his action from God, the Mighty, the Glorious, at all in this world or in the hereafter. It is only then that he will find God giving the full measure of his account as an act of grace from Himself and as a kindness. He will draw him near to Himself and will lavish His kindness on him and He will make Himself known to him with various kinds of kindness and acts of goodness, as it is His practice with His prophets and messengers and with His *awliya* and His favourites and friends, possessed of knowledge of Him. So the servant becomes every day more and more improved in regard to his affairs throughout his life and then he is transferred to the abode of the hereafter to experience "what no eye has seen, no ear has heard and what has not occurred to any human mind," a condition which in fact surpasses all understanding and which no explanation suffices to cover.

THE FIFTY-FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The enjoyments of life are discarded thrice: in the beginning, the servant of God goes on in the darkness of his

ignorance and in a distracted condition, acting freely by the urges of his nature in all the various circumstances of life without any attitude of service towards his Lord, and without any rein of religious law to control him, and without any limits as to where to stop by His order. While he is in this state, God looks to him with the eye of mercy, so He sends towards him an admonisher from among the people, one who is a righteous servant of His, and a counterpart of his admonishers is also found in his own self. So both these admonishers become victorious over his self and nature, and admonition produces an effect on his mind. Then the defect of what is in him, such as his riding the conveyance of his own nature and his opposition to truth – becomes manifest, so he inclines towards the law of God in all his activities.

. Thus the servant of God becomes a Muslim, standing by the law of God, vanishing from his own nature, and giving up the unlawful things of the world as also those that are of doubtful nature and from the help of people. So he takes to true permissible things and things made lawful by law in all questions of food and drink, and dress and marriage, and residence and all other affairs; and all this is unavoidable in protecting the foundations of physical health and in deriving strength for obedience to God, so that one may receive in full the share allotted to him and beyond which one cannot go – and there is no getting away from this worldly life without having access to it and obtaining it.

So he travels on the conveyance of permissible and lawful things in conditions of his life so much so that this conveyance takes him to the height of *wilayat*, and gives him an entry into the company of the verifiers of truth and chosen people possessed of firm resolution who are desirous of the reality which is God. So he eats with His order, then he (the pilgrim) hears a voice from God within himself, saying "Discard your ownself and come: Discard enjoyments and the creation if you want the Creator and put off both your shoes of this world

and of the hereafter and be empty of all existences and of things which will be created in future and of all desires. Be devoid of all and vanish from everything. Be happy with the unity of God and the discarding of polytheism and with the sincerity of purpose. Then enter the vast expanse of Divine nearness with your head bent low out of reverence and do not look right towards the life hereafter nor left towards the worldly life nor yet towards the people nor yet still towards enjoyments."

After he attains this stage and his arrival there becomes an established fact, he receives the robe of honour from God and is covered with lights of honour and various kinds of favour. Then it is said to him, "Dress yourself with blessings and favours and do not be ill-mannered so as to reject and discard desires because the rejection of the gifts of the king amounts to putting pressure on him and slighting his august power." Then he becomes wrapped up in His favour and allottment without his playing any part in the matter. Before this, he used to be covered in his desires and urges of the self. So it will be said to him, "Cover yourself with the blessings and favours of God."

For him, therefore, are four states in attaining the enjoyments and allottments. The first state is that of the urges of nature and this is unlawful. The second state is of the law and this is permissible and lawful. The third state is that of inner commandment and this is the state of *wilayat* and the discarding of desires. The fourth state is that of Divine favour, and this is the state of disappearance of purpose and attainment of *badaliyyat,* and of being the (Divine) objective, standing by the decree of Destiny, which is the act of God; and this is the state of knowledge and of being possessed of the quality of righteousness and no one can be called really righteous unless he has attained this position.

This accords with the word of God:

Surely my friend is Allah, Who revealed the Book, and He befriends the righteous (7:196).

So he is a servant who is restrained from utilizing anything of use and benefit to himself, and from rejecting anything that harms and causes mischief to him. He becomes like a suckling babe in the hands of its nurse and like a dead body that is being washed by one who is giving it a funeral bath. So the hand of providence undertakes his upbringing without his having any choice in the matter and without any effort on his part, his disappearing from all these things, and not having any state nor any position nor yet any purpose but standing by the decree of Destiny, who sometimes puts him in restraint, and at others makes him feel at ease, and sometimes makes him rich and at other makes him poor. He makes no choice nor does he entertain any desire for the passing of any state and change in it. On the contrary, he shows abiding pleasure and eternal concord. This is the last point of spiritual state which is obtained by the *abdal* and *awliya*.

THE FIFTY-SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When the servant of God has vanished from creation and desire, and from his own self and purpose and wishes of this world and of the hereafter, he does not want anything except God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and everything goes out of his heart. It is then that he attains God Who selects him and chooses him and loves him and makes him loved by the creation, and also makes him such that he loves Him as well as His nearness and receives His favour through His grace and rolls in His blessings. He throws open to him the doors of His mercy and promises to him that He will never shut them against him. The servant then adopts God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and intends by His intention, and devises means by His devising, and wills a thing by His will, and feels pleased by His pleasure, and carries out His commandment and not anyone else's, and does not see any existence except His, the Mighty, the Glorious, nor any act. Then it pleases God that He makes to him promise and does not manifest its fulfilment to His servant, and the thing which the

servant expects in this connection may not come to him, and this is because the separateness disappears with the disappearance of desire and purpose and of the seeking of enjoyments. Then his whole self becomes the very act of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and His object. So neither promise nor breach of promise can be spoken of in this connection because this kind of thing can be attributed to one who has desire and purpose. At this stage, the promise of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, in respect of such a person, can be illustrated by the example of a man who intends within his own self to do a certain thing, then turns the same intent towards something else in the same way as God, the Mighty, the Glorious, has recalled to our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with regard to revelations abrogating and abrogated as in the words:

> *Whatever message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest thou not that Allah is Possessor of power over all things?* (2:106)

When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), purified of desire and purpose except on certain occasions which God has mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, such as in the case of the prisoners on the day of Battle of Badr as in the following words:

> *You desire the frail goods of this world, while Allah desires (for you) the Hereafter. And He is Mighty, Wise. Were it not for an ordinance from Allah that had gone before, surely there would have befallen you a great chastisement for what you were going to do.* (8:67-68)

He (the Holy Prophet) was the object of God, whom He would not leave in one condition and in one thing and in one promise but He would shift him towards the decree of Destiny and leave the reign of Destiny to be handled by him; so He would move him and make him roll in the midst of Destiny and keep him alert by His words:

Knowest thou not that Allah is Possessor of power over all things? (2:106)

In other words, certainly you are in the ocean of His decreed Providence, the waves of which toss you sometimes this way and sometimes that. So the terminus of the affairs of the *wali* is the starting point of the affairs of the Holy Prophet. There is no stage after *wilayat* and *badaliyat* except the stage of *nubuwwat*.

THE FIFTY-SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

All the different states of spiritual experiences are states of restraint because the *wali* is commanded to look after them. Whatever is ordered to be looked after brings restraint. Standing by the decree of Providence is invariably a state of ease, because there is nothing there which one is commanded to look after except his own being in existence in the decree of Destiny. So it is necessary that the *wali* should not dispute in the matter of the decree of Destiny. He should rather be in accord and not make any contention in regard to all that may happen to him, whether it be sweet or bitter. The states of experience are limited, so it is commanded that the limits should be guarded. On the other hand, the act of God, which is destiny, has no limits that are to be guarded.

The indication that the servant of God has attained the station of Destiny and act of God and that of ease is that he is commanded to ask for enjoyments after he has been commanded to discard them and keep away from them, because when his inside is emptied of enjoyments and nothing remains in him except the Lord, he is made at ease and is commanded to ask and long for and want things that are his portion, and which he is sure to receive and attain by his asking for them, so that his dignity in the sight of God and his position and the favour of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, in the acceptance of his prayer, may become established facts. To use one's tongue for asking in

the matter of gifts of enjoyments are mostly indications of ease after restraint, and exit from all states of experience and stations, and from the strains of keeping within the bounds.

If it is objected that this disappearance of the difficulty of keeping the law leads to atheism and exit from Islam and to dismissal of God's word. *And serve thy Lord, until there comes death to thee* (15:99), my reply would be that this does not mean that God is very generous and His friend is very dear to Him so much so that He cannot allow him to occupy a position of defect, and one that is ugly in the eye of His law and religion. On the contrary, He saves him from all that has been discussed and turns him away from them and protects him and keeps him alert and directs him to the keeping of the bounds of law. So he acquires protection against sin and keeps within the bounds of the law without any effort and struggle from himself, while he is not conscious of this performance on account of his being in the nearness of his Lord, the Mighty, the Glorious. God says:

> *Thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency. Surely he was one of Our chosen servants* (12:24).
>
> He also says:
> *As regards My servants, thou hast no authority over them* (15:42).
>
> And He also says:
> *Save the servants of Allah, the purified ones* (37:40).

O poor man! such a person is held aloft by God and is His object, and He nourishes him in the lap of His nearness and His kindness. How can the devil approach him and how can evil and disagreeable things get near to him? How is it that you keep away from nourishment and pay your homage to position? You have said a bad thing. May such a vile and mean courage and faulty intelligence and ill-conceived opinion be destroyed by His all-comprehensive power and perfect kindness and extensive

mercy! May He cover us by coverings that are perfect and able to keep off sins and to protect us, and may He nourish us, by His perfect blessings and abiding favours through His spontaneous act of kindness!

THE FIFTY-EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Be blind to all sides and do not open your eyes to anything of them. So long as you look at any one of them, the side of the favour of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and of His nearness, will not be opened to you. So close all the sides with your realisation of the unity of God and with the effacement of your self, together with your fading away and your own effacement and that of your knowledge. Then will be opened to the eye of your heart the side of God, the Mighty, the Great, and you will see it with the two eyes of your heart when it comes with the rays of the light of your heart and your faith and your settled conviction. At that time there will appear a light from your inside which will manifest itself on your outside in the manner of the light of a lamp which on a dark night, appears through its orifices and loopholes and the outside of the house becomes illuminated by the light of the inside. So the self and the organs of the body will feel at ease with the promise of God and His gift, to the exclusion of the gifts of others besides Him and of promise of others besides Him.

So have mercy on your own self and do not be unjust to it, and do not throw it in the darkness of your ignorance and your foolishness, so as to look at the sides of creation and of might, of power and of acquisition and of means, and so as to rely on them; for if you do that all the sides will be closed against you and the side of the favour of God will not be opened to you by way of chastisement and retribution, and on account of your polytheism in looking up, to something besides Him. So when you have realised His unity and looked at His favour, and placed your hopes on Him to the exclusion of all others, and have made

yourself blind of all except Him, He will make you close and near to Himself and will show His mercy to you and will nourish you and feed you and give you drink and give you medicine, and make you comfortable and bestow gifts on you and make you opulent and help you and will make you a ruler, and make you vanish from the creation and from your own self and make you disappear, so that after this you will see neither your poverty nor your affluence.

THE FIFTY-NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Your condition must be either of the following two. It will either be a state of calamity or of blessing. If it is a state of calamity, you should ask therein for patience, even with effort — and this is an inferior state; and ask for patience proper, which is a higher state than the other. Then you should ask for pleasure with the decree of God and concord with it and finally to be merged in it; and this is a state befitting the *abdal* and men of spiritual knowledge, people of knowledge of God, the Mighty, the Glorious. And if it is a state of blessing you should ask in it thankfulness on account of it. Thankfulness can be through the tongue and through the heart and through the organs of the body.

The thankfulness of the tongue consists of acknowledging that the blessing is from God and of avoiding ascribing it to the people, or to your own self, or to your might or to your power or to your movement or to your effort or to anything or anybody else besides you, through whose hands it had to pass, because you yourself and they are only the means and instruments for it. The real allotter and executor and creator of it and the actor in the affair and one who is the prime mover of it is God, the Mighty, the Glorious. The Allotter is God and the executor is God and their Creator is God. So He is more deserving of thanks than others. For example, one does not look towards the slave who carries a present but towards the master,

the sender of the gift. God says in respect of one who lacks in this correct attitude:

> *They know the outward of this world's life, but of the Hereafter they are heedless* (30:7).

So whoever looks to the outside and the cause, and his knowledge does not go beyond these, is ignorant and defective in his intelligence. The term "intelligent" applies to a person on account of his insight into the ultimate end of things. Thankfulness of the heart consists in believing with the firmest standing conviction that all that is with you of the blessings, benefits and enjoyments, external as well as internal, in your movements and reposes, are from God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and from no one else. Your thankfulness by tongue will express what is in your heart as He has said:

> *And whatever good you have, it is from Allah* (16:53).

> *And (He) granted to you His favours completely outwardly and inwardly* (31:20).

Again He says:

> *And if you count Allah's favours, you will not be able to number them* (14:34).

So with all these statements, there can be no bestower of favours for a Muslim but God. The thankfulness of the organs of the body consists in exercising and using them in obeying His commandments to the exclusion of all others in the creation. You should not respond to anyone among the creation for anything in which there is any opposition to God, and creation in this connection includes your own self and your desires and purposes and your wishes and everything else. Make obedience to God, the primary thing under which every other thing should come, and make it the guiding factor and make whatever is besides this of secondary and subordinate consideration. If you act differently you will be deviating from the right course and will prove yourself an unjust person for His believing servants and

will be following the way which is not the way of righteous people. God, the Mighty, the Glorious, says:

> *And whoever judges not by what Allah has revealed, those are the wrongdoers* (5:45).
>
> And elsewhere it is written:
> *Those are the transgressors* (5:47).

In that case, your destination will be the fire of which the fuel are people and stones. When you cannot bear fever for one hour in this world and cannot bear very small splinters of fire in it, how will you bear for eternity the hell in the company of its inmates? So run away, run away; make haste; make haste, seek refuge in God, seek refuge in God.

Guard both the above-mentioned states together with their conditions because you cannot be free from either of them for the whole of your life – either the state of calamity or the state of happiness. Give each state its right to your patience and thankfulness accordingly as I have described to you. Do not complain in the state of calamity to anyone from among the people and by no means express your annoyance to anyone and do not blame your Lord in your mind and do not doubt His wisdom and His choice of the best thing for you in your worldly life and in your life hereafter. Neither should you go in your zeal to anyone among the people for the purpose of finding an escape because that will be your associating something with him.

No one shares anything in God's possession and no one is able to harm or to give benefit or to remove difficulties or to procure anything or to cause illness and bring about calamity and restore to health and confer anything good except Him. So do not be ingrossed in the creation, either outwardly or inwardly, for they will never avail you anything against God, but stick to patience and pleasure with God and harmony with Him, and absorption in His action.

If you are deprived of all these blessings, it becomes incumbent on you to call to Him for help and show humility and to acknowledge your sins and to complain to Him of the evil of your self and against your keeping away from truth, and to profess to Him His unity together with His blessings; and proclaim your dissociation from polytheism and harmony till the writing of Destiny attains its fullness, and the calamity disappears and grief is removed and then comes the favour of God and ease and relief and happiness, as it came in the case of Job, the Prophet of God — in the same way as the darkness of night goes away and the whiteness of day comes and the coldness of winter disappears and the breeze of spring comes with its sweet smell. Because for everything there is an opposite and a contrary, and an end and a goal. So patience is its key, and its beginning and its end, and its guarantee of welfare. This is as it has been related in the traditions of the Holy Prophet, that is, "Patience is to the faith as the head is to the body." And in another narration: "Patience is the whole of faith."

Sometimes thankfulness comes through the enjoyment of God's favours and this is a portion of it in return for the state of your self-effacement and of vanishing away of your desires and of your zeal for the preservation and guarding of the bounds of law; and this is the farthest point of advancement. Take lesson from what I have mentioned to you. You will be guided if God, the Exalted, so wills.

THE SIXTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The beginning of spiritual life (spiritual journey) is to get out of the natural urges into the path of the law and then into the way of destiny, and still onward to be back to the natural urges but in keeping with preservation of the law. You should get out of your urges of nature in the matter of food and drink, and dress and marital relations and place of residence, and tendencies and habits, into the injunctions and prohibitions of the

law. You are to follow the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), as God says:

> *And whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and whatever he forbids you, abstain (therefrom)* (59:7).

He also says:

> *Say: If you love Allah, follow me: Allah will love you* (3:30).

You will be made to vanish from your desires and your self and your disobedience both outwardly and inwardly; then there will remain nothing in your inside except the unity of God, and nothing in your outside except obedience and servitude to God in what He has enjoined and forbidden. This will remain in your manner and way and be a kind of garment for you in your movements and restful conditions, during your nights and your days and in your journey, and when you are in good health, and when you are suffering from bad health and in all your conditions.

Then you will be carried to the valley of Destiny and you will be controlled by Destiny. Then you will vanish from your efforts and your struggle and from your power and your strength, and portions will be brought to you, the writing of which has rendered the pen dry and the knowledge of which has gone beforehand. Then you will be a partaker in these portions and will be given protection and safety in their midst and the boundaries of the law will be preserved in them, and harmony with the act of God will be obtained therein, and the regulation of law will not be broken therein, so as to make the unlawful thing permissible and to minimise the gravity of the commandment. God says:

> *Surely We have revealed the reminder and We will most surely be its Guardian* (15:9).

And He also says:

> *Thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency. Surely he was one of Our chosen servants* (12:24).

The protection and guardianship of God will be accompanying you till you meet your Lord by His Mercy. It is your portion fixed for you; and it was withheld from you during your journey through wildernesses and deserts of desires and urges of nature, because it would be a heavy burden. So you were unburdened of it lest it should be heavy on you and you become weakened and diverted from your purpose and your objective and this up to the time of your reaching the threshold of annihilation, and this is the attainment of nearness to God and of knowledge of Him and of being particularly favoured with secrets and different kinds of knowledge and entrance into the sea of lights in such a way that the darkness of nature does not endanger the lights.

So the nature remains in man to the point of the separation of the soul from the body, in order that the portions may be fully received, because had the nature disappeared from man, he would have been in the category of the angels and the system, would have been distorted and the wisdom of God be frustrated. So the nature will linger in order that you may take full share of your portions and enjoyments. This will be an allowance, not the original thing, as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "Three things from your world have been made dear to me — perfumes and women and the coolness of my eyes is reposed in prayer."

When the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) vanished from the world and what is in it, his portions were returned to him, portions that were withheld from him while he was on his journey towards his Lord; so he took full share of it to be in accord with his Lord and to be pleased in His act and obedience to His commandment. His attributes are holy

and His mercy universal and His grace accompanies his saints and His Prophet. The *wali* is like this in this matter — his portions and enjoyments are given back to him after his annihilation and this together with the guarding of the bounds of law. This is a return from the destination towards the start (in the terminology of the *sufis*).

THE SIXTY-FIRST DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Every believer is charged with hesitation and scrutiny at the time of the arrival of portions, in receiving and accepting them until the commandment of law declares them permissible and the Divine knowledge sanctions them as the portion, as the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "Verily the believer scrutinises and the hypocrite pounces upon (anything that comes to him)."

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also said: "A believer is hesitant." And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) still further said: "Discard whatever causes doubt in your mind and accept what does not cause such a doubt."

So a believer hesitates at every item of food and drink and dress, and affairs of marriage and all other things which are made accessible to him so he will not accept any of these unless a decision is given to him in favour of its permissibility and acceptability by the commandment of law, if one is in the state of piety; or unless a decision is given for him in this regard by the inner commandment if one is in the state of *wilayat*, or unless a decision is given to him in this regard by the Divine knowledge if one is in the state of *abdal* and *ghauth*, as also by the act of God which is the very destiny and this last state is the state of annihilation.

Then comes another state in which one receives whatever comes to one and is made accessible to one, provided it is not taken exception to by the commandment of law or the inner commandment or the Divine knowledge; but if these object to any of these things one refrains from receiving it and discards it. This is contrary to the former state in which hesitation and delay are predominant whereas in the second, the acceptance, reception and the use of the acquired thing is predominant.

Still further comes to him a third state in which remains just reception and use of the acquired thing among the blessings without any interference of any of the three things. This is the reality of annihilation and in this state the believer becomes immune from all calamities and infringement of the bounds of law and all evils are kept away from him, as God, the Exalted says: .

> *Thus (it was) that We might turn away from him evil and indecency. Surely he was one of Our chosen servants* (12:24).

So the servant of God becomes protected against all infringements of the bounds of law like one who has been entrusted with His permission with all affairs, and who is given absolute power in all permissible things in order to make good easily accessible to him. All that comes to him in this position has been cleared for him of all calamities and distresses and difficulties in this world and in the hereafter, and is in perfect accord with the purpose of God and His pleasure and act, and there is no state above this and this is the goal. This is meant for the chiefs of the great *awliya* who are purified and are pure, possessors of secrets - people who have attained to the threshold of the state which belongs to prophets (blessings of God be upon them all).

THE SIXTY-SECOND DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

How strange it is you should often say that so and so attained nearness to God and so and so has been kept away, and so and so has been favoured with gift and so and so has been deprived of it, and so and so has been enriched and so and so has been empoverished, and so and so has been kept healthy and so and so has been made ill, and so and so has been exalted and so and so has been rendered low, and so and so has been praised and so and so has been reproached, and so and so has been made truthful and so and so has been belied! Do you not know that He is One and that the One loves oneness in the matter of love and loves one who is singular in his love to Him? If He draws you near to His blessings and favours through others, then your love for Him will become faulty thereby and will be scattered. Because many a time there enters into your mind an attachment to one through whose hands appears the attainment of a blessing. As a result, the love of God in your heart suffers deficiency; and He, the Mighty, the Glorious, is jealous and does not love an associate; so He restrains the hands of other people from reaching you for assistance and the tongues of others from singing your praise and the legs of others from coming to you so that they may not divert you from Him. Have you not heard the saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?

> "Hearts are so constituted that one cannot help loving a person who has done him a favour, and must be repulsed from one who has caused him any harm."

So He withholds in all possible ways people from doing an act of favour to you until you realise His unity and love Him and become His wholly and solely, outwardly and inwardly, in your movements and restful conditions, so much so that you do not see any good except what comes from Him, nor any evil except what comes from Him; and you become completely

removed from the creation and from your own self and from your desires and from your purpose and from your wishes and from all that is besides God.

Then hands are made to open towards you with ampleness, munificence and gifts and tongues are released with your praise. Then you are nourished with lavish care through all times in this world and then in the hereafter.

Do not be ill-mannered, look at one who looks at you and be attentive to one who is attentive to you, and love one who loves you and respond to one who calls you, and extend your hand to one who keeps you firm against falling, who brings you out from the darkness of your ignorance and saves you from perishing and washes you clean of your dirt and purifies you from your filth and will release you from your dead and stinking self from your low desires and from your unredeemed self which commands evil, and from your misguided associates who are your devils, and from your ignorant friends who are waylayers on the way to God and who stand between you and everything that is decent and precious and attractive.

How long will you stick to your animal nature and to the creation and to your desire and to your disobedience and to the world and to the life after death and to whatever is besides God? Why are you so away from the Creator of things and from One who has brought everything to existence, Who is the first and last, the manifest and the secret, the returning point and the issuing point of things, and to Whom belongs the heart and the solace of the souls, and the unburdening of burdens and the giving of gifts and bestowing of favours?

THE SIXTY-THIRD DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

I saw in a dream as if I was saying: "O you! ascribing partnership to your Lord in your mind by your own self, and in your outward conduct by His creation, and in your actions by

your desires!" At this a man who was by my side, said: "What is this statement?" So I said: `It is a kind of spiritual knowledge."

THE SIXTY-FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

A certain matter had kept my mind very disturbed one day. My inner self was agitated under its burden and was asking for ease and comfort and a way out. I was asked what I wanted. I said: "I wanted death which has no life in it and a life which has no death in it."

I was then asked what kind of death it is that has no life in it and what kind of life it is that has no death in it. I said: "The death that has no life in it is my death from my own species so that I do not see them either in benefit or in harm, and my death from my own self and my own desire and my own purpose and my own wishes in my worldly life as well as in my life after death, so much so that I do not live in any of these and am not found in them. And the life that has no death in it is my life with the act of my Lord in such a manner that I have no existence in it, and my death in it is my existence with Him. Since I have attained understanding, this has been the most precious of all purposes of mine."

THE SIXTY-FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Why are you angry with your Lord on account of delay in the acceptance of your prayers? You say that you have been forbidden to ask of people and have been commanded to ask of Him and that while you pray to Him, He does not respond to your prayer. My reply to you is: "Are you a free man or are you a bondman?"

If you say you are a free man, you are an unbeliever. And if you say you are a slave, I should ask you: Are you finding fault with your master on account of delay in the acceptance of your prayer and are you entertaining doubt concerning His

wisdom and His mercy with regard to you and the whole of the creation and in His knowledge of all their affairs? Or are you not finding fault with Him?

If you do not blame Him and acknowledge His wisdom and purpose and sense of practical necessity in your case in delaying the acceptance of prayer, it is incumbent on you to be thankful to Him because He has adopted the best procedure for you and a thing which is a blessing and which prevents harm. And if you are blaming Him in this matter, you are an unbeliever on account of your finding fault with Him because thereby you are ascribing to Him injustice whereas He is not in the least unjust to His servants. He does not admit of any injustice and it is impossible for Him to be unjust, seeing that He is your Master, the Master of everything; and the Master has the fullest control over his possession to the measure of his liking. So the term "injustice" is not applicable to Him because forsooth an unjust person is he who interferes in the possession of another person without the latter's permission.

So, do not give way to resentment against Him in His action manifesting itself through you, even if it goes against your liking and against the desires of your self and even though outwardly it may be injurious to you. So it is incumbent on you that you should adopt thankfulness and patience and concord and pleasure with Him and should renounce resentment and accusation and the attitude of disobedience of your mind and its desires -- things that will lead you astray from the path of God. It is also incumbent on you to persist in prayers and in the sincerity of solicitation, and in entertaining good notion about your Lord and in waiting for better times, and in having faith in His promise and in exhibiting modesty in your attitude towards Him, and in showing accord with His commandment and in guarding His unity, and in your quickness in carrying out His orders and in keeping away from indulging in things He has prohibited, and in assuming the position of a dead man at the time of the

manifestation of His decree with regard to you and of His act in respect of you.

If it is unavoidable that you should cast blame and be lacking in confidence at all cost, then to blame your own self which by its very nature commands evil and disobedience to its Lord, the Mighty, the Glorious, is better than the other course. Your ascribing injustice to this self of yours is more proper than your ascribing it to your Lord. So beware of being in accord with your own self and of being friendly with it and of being pleased with its action and its word in all conditions, because it is the enemy of God and your enemy, is a friend of the enemy of God and your enemy, that is, the accursed devil. It is the vicegerent of the devil and its spy and is sincerely devoted to him.

So fear God and again fear God! Beware! Make good your escape! make good your escape! Accuse your own self and ascribe injustice to it and read to it the word of God:

> *Why should Allah chastise you if you are grateful and believe?* (4:147)
>
> Also the following words:
>
> *This is for that what your own hands have sent before, and because Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants* (3:181)
>
> Also remind it of these words of God:
>
> *Surely Allah wrongs not men in aught, but men wrong themselves* (10:44)

Read to yourself these words and other verses of the Qur'an to this effect and also the sayings of the Holy Prophet. Be at war with your own self for the sake of God. Be inimical to it on His behalf and fight with it and try to kill it and be a commander of His forces and army, because your self is the greatest enemy among the enemies of God. God has said:

"O David, discard your desire because there is no one who disputes with Me in My possession except the desire of man."

THE SIXTY-SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Do not say: "I will not pray to God for anything because if the prayed-for object has been allotted to me it will surely come to me whether I ask for it or not, whereas if it is not in my lot, He will not give it to me by my asking for it." No, you should ask of Him all that you want and need of good things of this world and of the hereafter provided there is nothing in it which is forbidden and injurious, because God has commanded us to ask of Him and has urged us to that end. He says:

Pray to Me; I will answer you (40:60).

He also says: *Ask Allah of His grace* (4:32).

And the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says: "Ask from God while you are fully confident of the acceptance of your prayer." And Holy Prophet further says: "Pray to God with the palms of your hand."

There are other sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) like this. Do not say: "Surely I have prayed for certain things to Him but He has not given them to me, so now I will not ask anything of Him." You should rather persist in your prayer to Him. If it is a thing which is allotted to you, He will send it to you after you have asked for it, and this will increase you in faith and certainty and in realising His unity, and will help you in keeping away from asking of people, and help you in turning to Him in all your conditions and instill confidence in you that all your needs are fulfilled by Him.

If it is not in your lot, He will give you self-sufficiency with regard to it and will give you pleasure with Himself, the Mighty, the Glorious, in spite of your poverty. If you are in the midst of poverty and illness, He will make you pleased with such

troubles. And if it is a question of debt He will turn the heart of the lender from an attitude of sever demand into that of gentleness towards you, and of deferment and of provision of facility up to the time when it is easy for you to repay the debt, or to a mood which will make Him write off the debt or make a reduction in it. Then if it is not written off on your behalf or reduced in this world, God, the Mighty, the Glorious, will give you in the life after death a considerable amount of reward in exchange for what He has not given you in response to your prayer in this world because He is generous, free from want, and merciful.

He will not disappoint either in this world or in the hereafter one who prays to Him. It cannot but bring in some benefit and acquisition, sooner or later. A saying of the Holy Prophet runs to the effect that the believer will see in the record of his deeds on the Day of Judgement some acts of merit which he had not performed nor was aware of. He will be asked. "Do you recognize them?"

He will say, "I do not know where these are from"

It will be said to him:

> "Surely this is in recompense for your petitions which you made in your worldly life, and this is because in making these prayers to God, the Mighty, the Glorious, you had been remembering Him and acknowledging his unity and keeping a thing in its proper place and giving a person his due and discarding the ascription of might and power to your own self, and renouncing pride and vanity and boastfulness, and all these constitute good deeds, for which there has been a reward in the eye of God, the Mighty, the Glorious."

THE SIXTY-SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Whenever you have fought with your own self and overcome it and killed it by the sword of opposition, God will revive it and it will contend with you and ask of you satisfaction of desires and relish for enjoyments from among sinful things as well as things permissible, with the result that you are to return to a struggle with your own self and attempt to overcome it, so that a reward may be written for you afresh every time. This is the meaning of the saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him):

> "We have returned from a minor *jihad* (meaning warfare with the unbelievers) to a major *jihad*.

He meant that their (return was) towards a struggle with their own selves in perpetuity and recurrence – a struggle against desires and enjoyments, and against the self being engrossed in sinful things. This is the meaning of the word of God.

> *And serve thy Lord, until there comes to thee which is certain* (15:99)

God has commanded His Prophet to serve Him and this implies opposition to man's own self because all service is declined by the self which desires just the opposite of it till the coming of certainty (death). If it is asked: How could the self of the Prophet of God decline service since he had no fleshly desires? Then God says:

> *Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed* (53:3-4)

It will be said to you that He addresses His Prophet in these words just to make an affirmation with regard to this subject, so it becomes applicable to the general condition of his followers up to the moment of the advent of the Hour. Then He, the Mighty, the Glorious, gave His Prophet power over his own self, so that it might not harm him, nor oblige him to struggle

against his own self and this distinguishes him from his followers. So when a believer persists in a spiritual struggle like this up to the point of the coming of death, and meets his Lord with a drawn sword besmeared with the blood of his self and his desires, He gives him what He has guaranteed him of the paradise in His word:

> *And as for him who fears to stand before his Lord and restrains himself from low desires, the Garden is surely the abode.* (79:41)

When He has made him enter the garden, He will make it his abode and resting place and the place of return which will make him secure from any shifting and transference to any other place or any return to the worldly abode; and He will renew for him from day to day and from hour to hour all kinds of provisions for pleasure, and will bestow on him all kinds of dress and ornaments which will never end nor be exhausted, as the believer has been renewing in this world every day, every hour and every moment the struggle against his own self and desires.

But as for the unbeliever and the hypocrite and the sinner, when they left struggling with their own selves and their desires in this world, and followed and made alliance with the devil, and then became mixed with various kinds of sins of unbelief and polytheism and similar things till death comes to them without their having adopted Islam and repented, God will make them enter the fire which is prepared for the unbelievers as is indicated in His words:

> *Then be on your guard against the fire whose fuel is men and stones; it is prepared for the disbelievers* (2:24).

· When He has made them enter it and made it their place of flight and place of return and place of refuge, it will burn their skins and their flesh and He will give them fresh skin and fresh flesh accordingly, as He says:

As often as their skins are burned, We shall change them for other skins (4:56)

He, the Mighty, the Glorious, will do so with them because of their having made an alliance with their own selves and desires in this world in the matter of committing sins. So the inmates of fire will have their skin and flesh renewed at all times so as to cause them chastisement and pain thereby, whereas the people of the garden will have their provisions of pleasure renewed at all times so as to cause an intensification of the gratification of their desires and pleasures which are with them. And this will be as a result of their struggles with their own selves in order to make them accord (with the will of God) in this world's life, and this is what is meant in the saying of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him): "This world is the culture ground for the hereafter."

THE SIXTY-EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When God grants the prayer of a servant of His and gives him what he asks for, His own purpose does not thereby become frustrated, nor does it affect the writing of which the pen has become dried (that is the final decree of Providence) nor that which has already occurred to the Divine knowledge. On the contrary, such a prayer is in conformity with the object of the Lord and occurs at the right time. So the acceptance of the prayer and the fulfilment of the need take place in due time and in accordance with a set plan which the Destiny has arranged beforehand in the beginning of time, and which have been waiting to see fulfilment at the appointed hour. This is what the people of knowledge have said in explaining the Divine word: *Every moment He is in a state of glory* (55:29).

This means that God drives the allottments of Destiny towards their appointed times. Thus God does not give any person anything in this world by mere prayer proceeding from

him, and similarly He does not turn away anything from him through mere prayer; and it is said that the saying of the Holy Prophet to this effect means that the decree of fate is not averted except by that prayer with regard to which it is decreed that it will so avert such a decree. In the same manner, no one will enter paradise in the life hereafter through his good deeds alone but by the mercy of God. However, the servants of God will be given ranks in the paradise according to their deeds.

There is a saying of Lady Ayesha (may God be pleased with her) that she asked the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him): "Will anyone enter paradise through his good deeds alone? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him) replied: "No, but by the mercy of God."

Then she said, "And not even you?"

So he said, "Yes, not even I, unless God covers me by His mercy." And with this he placed his hand on his head.

He did this to indicate that no one has any right against God, nor is He under any obligation to fulfil any promise. He rather does what He wills, chastises whom He wills, forgives whom He wills, shows mercy on whom He wills, bestows favour on whom He wills, and He has absolute power to do whatever He likes. He cannot be questioned with regard to what He does, whereas His servants will be questioned, and He gives sustenance to whom He wills by His favour and mercy, and withholds His favours from whomever He likes in exercise of His justice. It cannot be otherwise, since the creation from the Divine throne down to the very bottom of this earth, which is at the seventh layer downwards of this planet, is in His possession and is His creation. There is no master for them except Him and no creator for them besides Him. He has asked: *Is there any Creator besides Allah*? (35:3) And He has also asked. *Is there a god with Allah*? (27:63). And He has further said; *Knowest thou anyone equal to Him?* (19:65)

He also says:

Say: O Allah! Owner of the Kingdom, Thou givest the kingdom to whom Thou pleasest, and takest away the kingdom from whom Thou pleasest, and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest. In Thine hand is the good. Surely, Thou art Possessor of power over all things... Thou givest sustenance to whom Thou pleasest (3:25,26)

THE SIXTY-NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Do not ask of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, anything other than the forgiveness of past sins and protection from sins in the present and the future, and the power of goodly obedience; and to perform commandments and to abstain from prohibited things, and to be pleased with the bitterness of the decree of Providence and to be patient in the face of the severities of calamities; and to be thankful for the abundance of comforts and gifts, and lastly, to die a goodly death and be united with the prophets and *siddiqs* and *shahids* and virtuous men who are a goodly band of companions. Do not ask of Him things like the removal of poverty and calamity and the advent of affluence and ease, but ask instead leisure with what He has allotted and provided, and ask of Him perpetual protection in what He has placed you in the midst of and landed you in and involved you in, up to the time that He transfers you from that state to another and to one that is the opposite of it, because you do not know in which lies good poverty or affluence, in calamity or in ease. He has kept the knowledge of things hidden from you and He is alone in His knowledge of the good and the evil of things. There is a tradition handed down by Hazrat Umar bin al-Khattab in which he is reported to have said:

> "It matters little to me in what condition I see the morning of the day — whether it brings to me what I dislike, or it brings what I love, because I do not know in which of them lies good."

He said so on account of his perfect pleasure with the management of God and his satisfaction with His choice and decree. God says:

> *Fighting is enjoined on you, though it is disliked by you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may that you love a thing while it is evil for you* (2:216).

God knows what is good and what is bad and you do not know it.

And continue in this till your desire vanishes and your self is broken, humbled and overpowered and brought into subjection; then your purpose vanishes as also your wishes and all existence go out from your heart and nothing remains in it save God. Then is your heart filled with the love of God and your motive for attaining Him becomes sincere. After this, your purpose is returned to you by His command together with your desire to have some enjoyments of this world and of the hereafter; and then you will ask these things of God and seek them in obedience to His command and as a course of harmony with Him. If He makes a gift to you, you will be thankful for it and will appropriate the same, and if He withholds from you anything you will not be annoyed on that account and will experience no change in your mind and will not find fault with Him on that score, because you have not been seeking it from your desire and your purpose since your heart is free from these things, and you have not entertained any wish for these things but only followed the commandment of God through your petition to Him. Peace be on you.

THE SEVENTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

How can it be a good thing for you to be conceited in the matter of your deeds and to be conscious of the achievements of your self in this regard and to seek returns for them while saying that all these are from the power given by God and through His help and strength, purpose and favours? And if it is case of discarding sin, this again is through the immunity and protection provided by Him and help given by Him. How can you be without thankfulness on that account and why can't you not acknowledge all these blessings which He has made available to you? Whence is this spirit of disobedience and ignorance that you should feel proud of an act of courage which is not yours, and of an act of generosity and liberality of monetary help which belongs to others? When you cannot kill your enemy without the help of some valiant person who strikes your enemy and helps you to complete the act of killing, and without this other man you would have been laid prostrate and instead of your enemy you would have been killed; nor could you have spent some of your money unless there were some truthful, generous and trustworthy men to stand security on your behalf for an equal amount of money, whose assurance and promises inciting your contemptuousness and standing security on your behalf, you would not have given in charity even a grain from your wealth if all this is so, how can you be proud just on account of your own deed?

The best course for you is to give thanks and praise to the Helper and to praise Him continuously and to ascribe your achievement to Him in all conditions of your life unless it is a case of evil and sin and blame. When it comes to these last-mentioned things, you should ascribe them to your own self. You should ascribe to your own self injustice and bad manners and blame it for these, for it deserves these things more than anyone else, since it is the seat of all evil and commands everything bad and useless. If He, the Mighty, the Glorious, is the Creator of

your deeds and your efforts, you are the maker of efforts and He is the Creator of them. This is what some of the learned in Divine knowledge mean when they say: "The act will come and you cannot escape from it."

There is also a saying of the Holy Prophet to this effect:

"Perform good deeds and draw near to God, and direct yourself aright, since to everyone is made easy whatever he is created for."

THE SEVENTY-FIRST DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

You must be either one or the other of two things. You are either a seeker, or the object sought for. If you are a seeker or a disciple you must be burdened and be a carrier of burden carrying everything difficult and heavy. This is because you are a seeker and a seeker is to toil and he is reproved until he attains his object and succeeds in obtaining his beloved and attains his goal. It does not beseem you that you should flee from troubles which befall you in the matter of your life and wealth, and the members of your family and children until you are relieved of your burden and the load is taken away from you and your sufferings are removed from you as also your humiliation. You will be kept secure from all kinds of vices and dirt and filth and humiliation and abasement and illness and sufferings and neediness to people. You will be made to enter the category of people who are loved by God and nourished by Him lavishly and are His objects.

On the other hand, if you are the thing sought for, then do not blame God if He made a calamity befall you in the same way; and you should by no means entertain doubt with regard to your position and rank with Him, because He has put you in trial in order to make you attain the status of high personages and He wants to raise your position to the position of the *awliya* and the *abdal*. Do you like that your position be lower than theirs, or that

your robe of honour and light and blessings be other than what are theirs? Even if you are pleased with your inferior status, God the Mighty, the Glorious, will not be pleased with it. In this connection He says: *And Allah knows while you know not* (2:232).

He has chosen for you what is more elevated and brighter and higher and better, whereas you decline to have it.

Then if you say: How is it right that the perfected devotee should be put into trial when according to your division and description, the trial is meant for the lover, whereas the favourite one of God is the beloved?

We say: we have mentioned the rule first and have spoken of the possible exception next. There is not the shadow of a doubt that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the chief among the beloved and at the same time was the one who was tried the most. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

> "I have been affrighted so much on account of God that no one else is threatened like me, and I have been made to suffer so much on account of God that no one else is made to suffer equally; and there have come on me thirty days and nights in which we had not so much of food as could be hidden under the armpit of Bilal."

He further said:

> "Surely we prophets are most severely tried; next to us come those of lower grade and so on."

Still further he said:

> "I am the best in the knowledge of God and most afraid of Him among you all."

Now, how can the beloved be tried and affrighted since he is the favourite and the perfect devotee? This is so only because the object is to make the favourites attain, as we have

already pointed out, the higher stations of heaven, and because the grades of heavenly life are not raised except through good deeds in the worldly life. The life of the world is a cultivation ground of the life hereafter and the good deeds of the prophets and *awliya*, after the performance of commandments and prohibitions, consist in patience and pleasure and reconcilement in the midst of trial. It is then that the trial is removed from them and they are made to experience the blessings of God and His favour and lavish care till they meet the Lord in the eternity.

THE SEVENTY-SECOND DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Those who go to the markets from among the people of religion, in observation of the institutions of religion, or in performance of such commandments of God as those concerning the congregational prayers on Friday, or other religious congregations, or to fulfil other needs with which they may be confronted, are of several kinds.

Some of them are such that when they go to the market and see in it various kinds of provisions for the gratification of the senses and for enjoyments, are captivated thereby and their hearts become entangled therein and they thus fall into trial; and this becomes a cause of their ruin and of their discarding religion and its institutions and makes them incline towards yielding to their lower nature, and towards following their passions unless of course God looks after them by His mercy and protecting power and by His providing them with patience to struggle against these temptations; it is by this means that they can remain safe.

Then there are others among them who, when they see these things and are on the point of being ruined, return to their reasoning sense of religion and exercise self-control with an effort and drink the bitterness of discarding them. They are like valiant warriors in the cause of religion who are helped by God to assume control over their own selves and natures and desires

and passions. God awards them an abundance of reward in the life after death.

In this connection we have it in some of the traditions handed down by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him):

> "Seventy acts of virtue are recorded to the credit of a believer on his discarding the urge of passion while he is overpowered by it or when he overpowers it."

In another saying of his, we read similarly:

> "Some of them there are who obtain these enjoyments and appropriate them and acquire them by the favour and blessing of God in the shape of affluence and of worldly wealth and give thanks to God, the Mighty, the Glorious, on account of them."

There are still others who neither see, nor are aware of these enjoyments: they are blind to everything except God, the Mighty, the Glorious; so they do not see anything besides Him, and they do not hear anything besides Him. They are too engaged to consider anything except the Beloved and their urge for Him, and so they are far away from what keeps the world occupied. When you see such persons entering the market place and you ask them what they see in the market, they will say: "We do not see anything." Yes, they do see things, but they see them with their physical eyes and not with the eye of desires. The sight is of the appearance and not of the reality. It is an outward sight, not an inward one. So outwardly he sees what is in the market while in his heart he sees the Lord — sometimes His Glory and at others His Grace.

There are still others who, when they enter the market place, find that their hearts are filled on account of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, with mercy for the people in it. This pity for the people of the market keeps them too occupied to look at things which belong to these people and which are before them.

Such people remain engaged, right from the entrance up to the time of their exit, in prayer and in seeking the protection of God and intercession for its people, in an attitude of affection and mercy. Their hearts burn to seek their benefit and to prevent their loss, and their tongues remain engaged in the praise of God on account of all that He has given them from His blessings and favours. Such people are called the spiritual guards of the cities and the servants of God. If you like, you can call them men possessed of knowledge and *abdal* and men of piety and knowers of the unseen, the seen, His beloved, and His finished object, and His vicegerents on earth appointed over His servants, His ambassadors and executors of good, sweet of expression, guides, rightly-guided people and spiritual instructors. A person of this class is, so to speak, a philosopher's stone and the egg of a magpie. The pleasure of God and His blessings be on such a person and on everyone who has set his face towards God and who attains the summit of spiritual elevation.

THE SEVENTY-THIRD DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Sometimes God informs His *wali*s about the faults and falsehood of another person and his false claims about his actions and words and thoughts and intentions. So the *wali* of God is made to feel jealous in respect of his Lord and His Prophet and His religion. The inner anger and then also the outer anger are intensified with the thought. How can comfort be claimed in face of the existence of disease, both internal and external, and how can the faith in the unity of God be claimed in face of polytheistic tendencies which amount to unbelief and which take a man away from nearness to God and lead him to adopt an attitude belonging to the enemy, the devil, the accursed, and to the hypocrites who are sure to be flung and hurled into the lowest of hell and are sure to remain there forever? The mention of the faults of such a person and his evil actions and his insolence together with his big claims and his presumption to possess the spiritual state of the *siddiqs*, and his attitude of

competition towards those who have annihilated themselves in the decree, and his thus assuming the role of the finished object of God — are made to come out from the tongue of the *wali*.

This is done sometimes on account of the jealousy for the glory of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and at others for the refutation of such a false man and as a sort of admonition for him; and still at others for the predominance of the act of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and His purpose and His intensity of wrath over the false man who gives lie to the truth of the *wali*. So the *wali* is accused of backbiting the person concerned and it is asked, "Is the *wali* permitted to backbite anyone while he is forbidden to do it? Can he speak of anyone, absent or present, concerning things which are not known to the rank and file of people?" The fact is that such a denunciation on their part falls under the purview of the word of God: *Their sin is greater than their advantage* (2:219).

Apparently it (such criticism of the *wali*) is the denunciation of a disobedient man, but in truth, it is rousing the wrath of God and taking exception to His act. The condition of such an objector is bewilderment; it is his duty to remain silent under such circumstances and to offer submission and to try to find out its permissibility in the Law and not to raise objection to the work of God and his *wali* who makes these biting remarks on account of the false claims of the pretender. If he assumes this attitude it may result in the uprooting of the evil in him and be regarded as his repentance and return from his ignorance and bewilderment. So it will be a sort of attack on behalf of the *wali* and will thus benefit the self-conceited man who is on the verge of ruin, on account of his conceit and disobedience; and God guides whomever He likes to the right path.

THE SEVENTY-FOURTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

The first thing which a man of intelligence should see is the condition and composition of his own self and then all the

creations and inventions. Then he should infer from them the existence of their Creator and Originator, because the creation indicates the Creator, and strong power is an indication of the wise actor behind it, because all things are in existence through Him. It is this which is reported from Ibn Abbas (may God be pleased with him and his father) in his comment on the word of God.

> *And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth.* (45:13)

It is reported from the aforesaid in explanation of this verse that:

> "In everything there is an attribute from the attributes of God and every name is a sign of one of His names; so surely you are between His names and His attributes and works, inwardly through His power and outwardly through His wisdom. He is manifest in His attributes and concealed in His person. His person is concealed in His attributes and His attributes are concealed in His works. He has revealed His knowledge through His will and He has expressed His will in movements. He has concealed His skill and His workmanship and expressed His workmanship through His will. So He is hidden in His invisibility and He is manifest in His wisdom and power. *There is nothing like a likeness of Him and He is the Hearing and the Seeing.*

Surely, many secrets of spiritual knowledge have been brought to surface by this statement, which cannot come to the knowledge of anyone unless he has a heart which has a lamp of spiritual knowledge in it. And this privilege of this great man is due to the fact that the sinless hands of the Holy Prophet were raised in earnest prayer for him saying: "O Allah! give him understanding of religion and teach him the interpretation."

May Allah shower on us the same blessings which He showered on such people and may He gather us in their company on the Day of Resurrection together with their sanctity.

THE SEVENTY-FIFTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

I admonish you to fear God and to obey Him and to adopt the externals of law and purity of heart and self-control and cheerful appearance, and the habit of making gifts of useful things and removal of suffering and poverty, and the guarding of the sanctity of spiritual people and good dealing with the fellow-members of society and good counsel for the youngster, and to discard enmity with companions and to refrain from hoarding, and to discard the companionship of those who do not belong to the class of spiritual pilgrims and to render help in matters religious and worldly. The reality of religious poverty is that you should not convey your needs to one who is like you and the reality of affluence is that you should be above the need of creatures like yourself. *Tasawwuf* (spiritual culture) is obtained, not through discussion and talk, but through hunger and the giving up of things liked and approved of. Do not keep your knowledge in the forefront while approaching a *darvesh*; rather keep gentleness as (your principal characteristic), because a display of knowledge will make him uncomfortable whereas gentleness will make him feel at home. *Tasawwuf* is based on eight qualities (1) Generosity like that of Prophet Abraham; (2) Cheerful submission like that of Prophet Isaac; (3) Patience like that of Prophet Jacob; (4) Prayer like that of Prophet Zachariah; (5) Poverty like that of Prophet John; (6) Wearing of woollen dress like that of Prophet Moses; (7) Travelling about like that of Prophet Jesus; and (8) Religious poverty like that of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and all the rest).

THE SEVENTY-SIXTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

I admonish you that you should associate with the rich with dignity and with the poor with humility. It is incumbent on you to adopt humility and sincerity and this latter quality amounts to perpetual vision of the Creator. Do not blame God in respect of worldly means and be humble before Him in all conditions and do not damage the right of your brother, relying on the fact that between you and him there is a friendship. You should keep company with the *darveshes* with humility and good manners and liberality and kill your self till you regain your life in spirituality. The people who are nearest to God, the Mighty, the Glorious, are those who are most large-hearted in their behaviour. The best of deeds is to guard one's own self from being inclined to what is besides God, the Great. You should keep on exhorting people to stick to truth and patience. And it is enough for you to keep company with the *darveshes* and to serve the *awliya*.

A *darvesh* is he who is indifferent to everything besides God. To attack one who is beneath you is cowardice and to do the same thing with one who is above you is shamelessness; whereas to attack one who is equal to you is bad manners. To adopt the life of a *darvesh* and of a *sufi* needs an effort. Do not mix it up with anything which is in the nature of a joke. May Allah give us strength and you too. O *wali*! It devolves on you to keep on remembering Allah in all conditions because it brings together all the good things and it is also your duty to adhere to the covenant of God because it wards off all injurious things. It is also a duty of yours to remain prepared to meet all the events decreed by God, because they are bound to happen.

Know that you will be asked about your movements and your restful conditions so keep yourself engaged in what is most suitable for a particular time and save your organs from useless occupations. Furthermore, it is your duty to obey God and His

Prophet and those who rule in the latter's place. Give them their due and do not ask of them what is due to them and pray too for them in all conditions. It is also necessary that you should think well of Muslims and bear good intentions in respect of them, and try to secure for them everything that is good and you should not spend any night while entertaining anything evil for any of them in your heart, nor any grudge nor any enmity.

It is also necessary that you should pray for him who has been unjust to you and you should fear God, the Mighty, the Glorious. It is also your duty to eat only lawful things, and to inquire from people possessed of the knowledge of God concerning matters which you do not know. You should also cultivate modesty in respect of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and keep company with what is besides God only to the extent of your requirements of the companionship of God.

Give in charity from your wealth every morning, and in the night offer the funeral prayer for everyone who has died among the Muslims on that day. When you have finished your *maghrib* (early evening) prayer, invoke a prayer of *istikhara* (seeking good in one's affairs). You should repeat morning and evening seven times: *Allahumma ajirna minan nar*, meaning: "O Allah! protect us from fire." And stick to the prayers, *A'uzubillah-is-sami-il-Alim minash Shaitan-ir-Rajim*, meaning: "I seek the refuge in Allah, the Hearing, the Knowing, from Satan the accursed."

Then proceed to the glorification of God with the concluding words of chapter, The Banishment (*Hashr*):

> *He is Allah besides Whom there is no God; The Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah, besides Whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace, the Granter of security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every greatness. Glory be to Allah from that which they set up (with Him)!*

> *He is Allah, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner: His are the most excellent names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; He is the Mighty, the Wise.* (59:22-24)

God alone is the giver of strength and the helper, because there is no might and power except in God, the High, the Great.

THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Be with God, the Mighty, the Glorious, as if no creation exists, and be with the creation as if there is no self in you. When you are with God the Mighty, the Glorious, without the creation you will get Him and vanish from every other thing and when you are with the creation without your self, you will do justice and help the path of virtue and remain safe from the hardships of life. Leave everything outside the door while you are entering in your solitude and enter alone. When you have done so, you will see your friend in your solitude with your inner eye and will experience what is besides the creation, and then your self will vanish and in its place will come the command of God and His nearness. At this point your ignorance will be your knowledge, and your distance will be your nearness, and your silence will be your remembrance of God, and your bewilderment will prove friendship. O man! There will be nothing left at this stage except the Creator and the created. So if you have adopted the Creator, then say to the rest:

> *Surely they are an enemy to me, but not (so) the Lord of the worlds* (26:77)

He further said: Whoever has tasted it, has come to know it.

He was asked:

"How can one in whom the bitterness of bile predominates taste sweetness?"

In reply he said, "He should with an effort keep away the sensual desires from himself. O man! When a believer does a good deed, his animal self changes into his heart (i.e. in response to the dictates of the heart). The self attains the consciousness of the heart; then this heart changes into a secret; then the secret undergoes another change and becomes annihilated; then the annihilation passes through another transformation and becomes another existence." He further observed:

> "Friends have an access through every door. O man! The annihilation (self-effacement) is to deny all creations and transform your nature into the nature of the angels; then vanishing from the nature of the angels; and then getting back to the first way; and then your Lord will water you as much as He likes and cultivate you as much as He likes. If you want this stage, you should adopt Islam and then submission to the decree of God, then acquire the knowledge of God, then realise Him, and then exist in Him; and when you get such an existence you will wholly belong to Him. Piety is a work of an hour and abstemiousness of two hours and knowledge of God a work for all times."

THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

There should be ten characteristics of those who are engaged in spiritual struggles and in self-inspection and are determined to attain the spiritual goal to which they must stick. When by the permission of God they have established themselves in these and have made themselves firm, they have attained to a high position.

The first characteristic is that the servant should not swear by Him whether truthfully or falsely, intentionally or by mistake, because when he consolidates in himself this practice (of not swearing by Allah), and makes his tongue habituated to it, this practice will raise him to a position where he will be able

to give up swearing either intentionally or by mistake. When he becomes practised in this, God will open for him a door of His lights. He will recognise the benefit of this in his heart and will find exaltation in his rank, and strength in his determination, and patience, and will find praise in the midst of his brethren, and dignity in the midst of his neighbours, so much so that whoever recognise him will pay him respect and whoever sees him will be afraid of him.

The second characteristic is that he should avoid (speaking of) untruthful things seriously or jokingly, because if he practices this and makes it firm in his own self and makes his tongue habituated to it, God will open with it His heart and will clarify his knowledge with it in a manner that it will appear as if he doesn't know falsehood, and when he hears it from others he will regard it as a great blemish and will be ashamed of it in his own self, and if he prays to God to remove it there will be a reward for him.

The third characteristic is that he should be careful that when he promises anything to anyone he should not break his promise, or he should not make any promise at all. For surely this will be a (source of) great strength for his affair and a very balanced course for him to follow, since breach of promise belongs to the category of falsehood. So if he does so, the door of munificence will be opened to him and the rank of modesty will be allotted to him and he will rise in the minds of men of truth and he will be raised in the sight of God.

The fourth is that he should refrain from cursing anything in the creation, nor should he cause any harm to anything, not even to an atom or anything less than that, because this quality is among the virtues of the good, the truthful. Acting on this principle, a person gets a good end of life under the protection of God in this life together with what God has kept reserved for him in the form of his spiritual ranks, and He saves him from falling into destruction, and protects him from the

harm of people and bestows on him mercy for the servants of God and nearness of Himself.

The fifth is that he should refrain from praying for any harm to anyone people, even if he has been treated unjustly. So he should not retaliate either by tongue or by action but bear it patiently for God and should not take revenge either by word or by action. Surely this trait raises its possessor to high ranks. When a person gets trained in this he attains a noble position in this world and in the hereafter, and love and affection in the hearts of all people who accept the truth, both near and distant together with the acceptance of prayer and exaltation in goodness and honour in this world and in the hearts of believers.

The sixth characteristic is that he should not affirm his evidence on polytheism and unbelief and hypocrisy of one of those who follow the same *qiblah* (direction in prayer). This trait constitutes the perfection in the following of the *Sunnah* (practice of the Holy Prophet) and is very close to His pleasure and mercy. Thus it is an honourable and glorious door to God the Exalted, who grants it to His believing servant as a reward for his mercy to all people.

The seventh characteristic is that he should refrain from looking at anything of a sinful nature both outwardly and inwardly and should restrain his organs of the body from it because this is an action that is the quickest in bringing reward to the heart and the organs in the immediate worldly life together with what God has kept in store of the good things in the hereafter. We pray to God that He may do all of us the favour of granting the power to act on these traits and take away worldly desires from our hearts.

The eighth characteristic is that he should avoid putting any burden on anyone whether it be small or big. On the contrary, he should lift the burden from all people whether he is asked or not. Surely this constitutes the pinnacle of honour for the servants of God and the cause of nobility for the men of

piety, and it also provides strength to a man to admonish people to do good or forbid them to do evil. This constitutes the whole honour and dignity of God's servants, and of pious men, and enables them to enjoin good and forbid evil. At this stage the whole creation appears to them on the same level. When a man is at this stage, God transforms his heart into a state of needlessness and certainty and reliance on God, and God does not raise anyone while he is tied up with his worldly desires. The whole of creation to such a man possesses equal rights, and it should be firmly believed that this is a door of honour for the believers and of dignity for the righteous and it is a door very close to sincerity.

The ninth characteristic is that he should be free from all expectations from men, nor should he feel tempted in his heart by what is with them. Surely it is a great honour and pure needlessness and great kingdom and glorious pride and clear certainty and clear and healthy reliance on God; and this is a door from among the doors of reliance on God, and one of abstemiousness and one which enables one to attain fear of God, and imparts perfection to one's religious practices and it further constitutes a sign of complete and exclusive attachment to God.

The tenth characteristic is humility, because it is with this trait that the station of the servant is raised high, and his position made lofty, and his honour and eminence made perfect in the sight of God (glory be to Him) as also in the sight of people, and he is given power over what he desires from among the affairs of the world and of the hereafter. This is a trait which forms the whole root and branch and the perfection of obedience and with its help the servant of God is made to attain the position of the righteous people who are pleased with God in ease as well as in difficulties and it is the perfection of piety.

Humility consists in that the servant of God does not see anyone from among the people but sees in him superiority over himself and he says: "Perhaps this person is better than I am in

the sight of God and higher in position." If he is a small person, the servant of God says: "This man has not offended God and I have offended Him; so undoubtedly he is better than I am." And if the person concerned is a great man, he will say: "This man has served God before I have done so." If the person he sees is a learned man he will say: "This man has been given what has not reached me and he has obtained what I have not, and he knows what I am ignorant of and he acts with knowledge." And if the person concerned is an ignorant man he will say. "This man offended God in his ignorance and I have offended Him in spite of my knowledge, and I do not know what sort of end I shall meet and what kind of end he will meet." If this person is an unbeliever, he will say: "I do not know; it may be that he will become a Muslim and will end his life with good deeds and possibly I will become an unbeliever and will end my life with evil deeds."

This is the door of affection and fear and it is a thing of which the accompaniment should be preferred and the final thing which will abide with the servants of God.

Thus, when the servant of God becomes like this, God will keep him safe from all calamities and will make him attain the position of the companionship of God, the Mighty, the Glorious, and he becomes among the chosen ones and friends of God and he becomes an enemy of *Iblis* who is the enemy of God. This state constitutes the gate of mercy with the attainment of which the door of pride becomes closed, and the rope of self-conceit is cut asunder, and the sense of superiority in his own self in matters religious and worldly and spiritual becomes discarded, and this is the very essence of servitude and the cause of abstemiousness and is a sign of devotion to God; so there is nothing better than this. With the attainment of this state, his tongue should cease mentioning the people of the world and what is vain, and no work of his will attain completion without this step; and malice and conceit and trespassing of limits will be expelled from his heart in all his conditions, and his tongue (i.e.

talk) will be one and the same secretly as well as openly; and his purpose will be one in secret as well as in the open and so will be his words; and the people will be one in his sight in regard to admonition. He will not admonish by mentioning anyone from among the people with an evil reference, or bring any of his actions as an illustration, nor will he like that anyone should be mentioned with a bad reference because this weakness constitutes a calamity for the servants of God and hardship for the devotees, and will lead to the ruin of the ascetic except such of them as are helped by God with His mercy to keep their tongue and heart secure.

THE SEVENTY-NINTH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

When the saint was suffering from the illness of which he died, his son Sheikh Abdul Wahhab said to him: "Give me a parting admonition on which I should act after you have left this world."

He said to him: "It is incumbent on you to fear God and not fear anyone except Him, and not to hope from anyone except Him and entrust all your needs to Him. Do not rely on anyone except Him and ask everything from Him and do not place confidence on anyone besides Him. Stand by His Unity, stand by His Unity. All are agreed on this."

He further said: "When the heart becomes right with God, nothing is felt missing and nothing comes out of man."

Still further he said: "I am the core without the shell." And again he said: "Others have come to me; so make room for them and show courtesy to them. Here there is a great benefit. And do not make the place congested for these."

He was also heard saying: "Upon you be peace, the mercy of God and His blessings. May He protect you and me and turn with mercy to you and to me. I begin with the name of Allah unceasingly."

He kept on saying this for one day and one night and said: "Woe unto you. I do not fear anything, nor any angel nor even the angel of death. O angel of death! it is not you but One who has befriended me and Who has been bounteous to me."

Then he gave out a loud cry, and this took place on the evening on which he died and I am told by his sons, Abdul Razzaq and Musa, that he had been raising his hands and stretching them out and was heard saying: "And on you be peace and the mercy of God and His blessings. Repent and join the line. Presently I will be coming to you."

And he was saying: "Wait", when there came to him the last moment and the pang of death.

THE EIGHTIETH DISCOURSE

He (may God be pleased with him) said:

Between you and me and the creation, there is only He as also between the heaven and the earth. So do not judge me by anyone of them and do not judge anyone of them by me."

Then his son Abdul Aziz asked him about his pain and about his condition. He said: "Let not anyone ask me about anything. I am being turned over and over again in the knowledge of God."

It is further reported that his son, Abdul Aziz, asked him about his disease. On this he said: "Surely no one, neither any man nor any jinn, nor any angel knows or understands my disease. The knowledge of God is not diminished by the command of God. The command changes but the knowledge does not change. The command may be abrogated but not knowledge. God causes to pass away and establishes what He pleases, and with Him is the basis of the Book:

> *And He can not be questioned as to what He does, and they will the questioned* (21:23).

The attributes will move on as it is again narrated.

His son Abdul Jabbar asked him: "What part of your body is ailing?" He said: "All the parts of my body are ailing except my heart which has no pain in it and is sound with God."

Then death came to him as he was saying:

> "I seek the help of God with the formula: There is no object of worship except God, glory be to Him and be He exalted, the Everlasting, Who does not fear annihilation; glory be to Him Who has established His superiority through His power and overpowered His servants by means of death. There is no object of worship except God and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

I have been told by his son, Musa, that he was uttering the word *ta'azzaza* and his tongue was unable to utter it correctly, so he went on repeating it till he uttered this word *ta'azzaza* and prolonged the sound and stressed it so that he uttered it correctly at last. Then he said: "Allah, Allah, Allah," then his honoured soul left his body -- the pleasure of God be on him. May he allow His blessings to benefit us and grant us and all the Muslims a good end without abasing us and putting us in trial and may He thus enable us to join the men of piety. *Amen! Amen! Amen!*